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Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

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For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the 22 December Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT.

Ethiopia Offers Mediation Services to Yemen

JN2112152795 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih received Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin, who conveyed to the brother president a message from Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The message deals with developments in the Red Sea region after the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. The message also expresses Ethiopia's desire to carry out a mediation effort to solve the dispute between our country and Eritrea, proceeding from the strong relations between Ethiopia and the two neighboring countries.

The president welcomed Ethiopia's good efforts, stressing that Eritrea should first remove all traces of its aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir and restore things to normal by evacuating the island and releasing the Yemeni people it is detaining. He added that after that, the two countries would hold a dialogue to solve the dispute over maritime borders based on international charters and laws.

Ethiopian Minister Visits Yemen

JN2212070895 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, received Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin, who conveyed to the brother president a message from Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zinawi. [passage omitted] The president asserted our country's keenness on dialogue and peaceful methods to settle the dispute between the two neighborly countries. He praised Yemeni-Ethiopian relations as historic, special, and cordial.

The Ethiopian foreign minister left Sanaa yesterday following a short visit to our country that lasted a few hours. In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', he expressed satisfaction with the results of his meeting with brother Lt. Gen. 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister. He noted that he found a deep understanding and a sincere desire on the part of Yemen to solve the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute through peaceful means to avoid the shedding of blood between the two neighborly peoples who are bound with historic ties.

He underlined his intimate relationship between Lt. Gen. 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, and Eritrean President Asaias Afwerki. He said that the Ethiopian president trusts their wisdom and believes that their intimate personal relations would help settle the problem.

Concluding his statement, he said: Each of Yemen and Eritrea fully realize the possible repercussions of disorder and that peace [words indistinct]. Moreover, many countries abutting the Red Sea, led by Ethiopia, are very much interested in making peace and entrenching stability. He expressed his country's readiness to [words indistinct] restore relations between the two countries to normal so that amity would prevail between the two fraternal peoples. [passage omitted]

Yemen Accepts Offer

JN2212115895 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1112 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa,22 Dec (WAKH)—The Yemeni News Agency, SABA', said today that the Yemeni leadership yesterday accepted Ethiopia's mediation to resolve the dispute with Eritrea on the al-Hanish al-Kabir Island provided that Eritrea ends its military presence on the island and returns the Yemeni prisoners. This, SABA' added, will pave the road for embarking on dialogue between the two countries to demarcate the maritime borders in light of international charters and laws.

In another development, the Aden-based AL-AYYAM newspaper today cited well-informed political sources as saying that a committee was formed to contain the military situation resulting from the Eritrean occupation of al-Hanish al-Kabir island. The committee comprises Yemeni and Eritrean representatives, in addition to the U.S. military charges d'affaires at the U.S. Embassies in Sana and Asmara.

AL-AYYAM noted that this step was taken following President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's meeting with the U.S. ambassador in Sanaa last week. During that meeting, Salih asked the ambassador to convey a message to the U.S. Administration, the content of which was not revealed.

Eritrean President on 'Arbitration'

*NC2212094095 Paris AFP in English
0912 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Dubayy, Dec 22 (AFP)—Eritrea on Friday [22 December] called for its dispute with Yemen over the Red Sea island of al-Hanish al-Kabir to be resolved through international arbitration.

A statement from Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki published by the Eritrean embassy in Abu Dhabi said the conflict over the "Hanish archipelago" should be handled by the "arbitration" of the International Court of Justice. [passage omitted]

UN Envoy on Dispute, Butrus-Ghali's Efforts

*NC2212095295 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic
0610 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[Telephone interview with 'Abdallah al-Ashtal, Yemeni envoy to the United Nations, in New York, by Fayiz al-Miliji, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Miliji] Can you tell us about the arrangements for the visit to Yemen by UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali, its circumstances, and the desired goals?

[Al-Ashtal] The UN secretary general will visit the region, including Yemen, where he will arrive on 29 December. Recent developments will find him trying to find a solution to the problem of the al-Hanish al-Kabir island. This depends on both parties accepting the results of these efforts. We hope he will succeed in his mission and we welcome his efforts. [passage omitted]

[Al-Miliji] In your meeting with the UN secretary general, how did you broach the crisis between you and Eritrea?

[Al-Ashtal] I told the UN secretary general of the latest developments in this crisis. I highlighted the Yemeni Cabinet's statement, emphasizing three points: First, the release of the Yemeni POW's; second, the withdrawal of the Eritrean forces from the islands; and third, a start to negotiations to demarcate the maritime borders between the two countries, consequently resolving the issue of who owns the islands. It is not a problem of one island, but several. The UN secretary general showed interest in the issue and expressed his hope for self-restraint and the possibility of a peaceful solution. He also promised to exert his good offices when he visits Sanaa and possibly Asmara. [passage omitted]

[Al-Miliji] Will attempts to contain the crisis focus only on the UN secretary general's efforts?

[Al-Ashtal] We in Yemen welcome any efforts to resolve this crisis peacefully. There is a sure and sincere desire to find a peaceful solution and prevent things from escalating. We hope Eritrea will respond positively to these efforts.

Yemen's Taqi: 'Military Option' Not Ruled Out

*JN2112204895 Baghdad Iraq Television Network
in Arabic 1800 GMT 21 Dec 95*

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemen has asserted that it seeks to resolve the current dispute with Eritrea through peaceful means in order to spare bloodshed and keep the region away from the woes of war.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Sanaa, Mazhar Taqi, under secretary of the Yemeni Information Ministry, said his country cannot and will not relinquish its legitimate rights to the Yemeni islands, including the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, which was occupied by Eritrean forces on Friday [15 December].

Taqi added that if peaceful means to resolve the conflict with Eritrea are exhausted, his country will use all means to regain its sovereign right on this island. These means include the military option, he said.

Taqi added that his country welcomes any international efforts to resolve the conflict between Yemen and Eritrea, provided that Yemeni rights to sovereignty over its island are preserved in accordance with international laws and charters.

He said his country rejects Eritrea's position, which calls for direct talks under the current circumstances on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, which is now under full Eritrean occupation. He added that Yemen sets as conditions for dialogue the Eritrean forces' withdrawal from this island and the return of all 106 Yemeni POW's.

Taqi pointed out that during the Eritrean aggression, his country's casualties were three martyrs and six wounded, in addition to the POW's. He explained that the disputed island of al-Hanish al-Kabir was under Yemeni sovereignty since 1972 after British forces withdrew from it.

He pointed out that the island, whose area totals 90 square kilometers, is 28 miles off the Yemeni coast and 32 miles off the Eritrean coast.

Yemen's Salih, UAE's Zayid View Developments

JN2212065995 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 22 Dec 95

Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, and his brother His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], spoke on the telephone yesterday. During the conversation, the brother president briefed his brother His Highness Shaykh Zayid on developments in the situation following the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

The two presidents also discussed various issues and developments of concern to the two fraternal peoples and the Arab nation. The president of the republic emphasized our country's keenness on settling maritime border disputes with Eritrea through peaceful channels. He said that Eritrea should remove the traces of its aggression, return things to normal, and embark on a dialogue that would safeguard the legitimate rights in accordance with the international charters and laws.

Palestinian Affairs

PA, Hamas Fail To Resolve Differences in Cairo

Hamas To Boycott Elections

JN2112150295 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1216 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Hamas delegate Usamah Hamdan in Cairo by 'Arif Salimin in Jericho studio on 21 December; from the "Today's Events" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Salim] Good evening, Mr. Usamah Hamdan, member of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] negotiating delegation to the National Dialogue Conference with the [Palestinian] National Authority.

[Hamdan] Good evening.

[Salim] We would like you to give us an assessment of the dialogue sessions, especially since today is the last day of these sessions.

[Hamdan] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. No doubt, in such sessions we always like to emphasize an important issue; namely, that this is not the first meeting. God willing, this will not be the last meeting. Dialogue will continue between the sons of the one people in the various positions they represent.

I believe that among the most prominent positive things is the atmosphere that dominated the meeting, as well as the principle of dialogue. I also believe that the conclusion reached — namely, that our differences and problems can only be resolved through dialogue as a civilized way to address all issues, is a very prominent result and the best positive outcome that was attained and stressed as a reality in the Palestinian arena.

I also believe that the Authority is demanding the required guarantees to continue applying this policy in the Palestinian arena.

Moreover, I believe that the second positive thing that came out of these meetings is the fact that an atmosphere of openness has prevailed. In other words, there was no attempt at equivocation, so we openly discussed all past problems and encroachments, as well as all the concerns and the legitimate anxieties of both sides regarding many issues. In my assessment, this openness is the first step in healing and in reaching an understanding.

[Salim] Brother Usamah: Based on these remarks, can we be assured about the future of national unity here?

[Hamdan] Prior to this dialogue, I had said we were very concerned about the future of national unity and about keeping our Palestinian people, who fought the occupation, a constantly unified people. Now I can confidently say that national unity is being consolidated, and that we will always be eager to enhance it. God willing, our past practices to enhance national unity will be continued and enhanced.

[Salim] What about the Hamas Movement's position on elections?

[Hamdan] A long and very detailed dialogue was held on elections. This issue was discussed in two sessions of the dialogue over approximately 10 hours, apart from the hours of side discussions.

I believe that we reached the following conclusion: The election process itself is part of the larger democratic process which is represented by freedom of expression, public freedoms, and respect for human rights.

Thus, in light of political facts, we in the Hamas Movement were of the opinion not to participate in the current election process and to work around this issue without creating problems with our brothers in the Authority. This was actually the case.

[Salim] Mr. Usamah: The Hamas Movement has issued a circular urging its members in Palestine to register their names for the elections. Is this an indication that some Hamas supporters or members will run for the elections as independents?

[Hamdan] I have said that the election process or nominations to the elections are part of a democratic process. We in the Hamas Movement believe that registration is part of this process. That is why we instructed our brothers and supporters to register for the elections. Nonetheless, I believe that the decision to run in the elections or to vote in the elections reflects an intrinsic choice for the movement. We have constantly dealt with all affairs in positive manner. We even view the boycott as a positive practice, given the considerations I have just mentioned.

[Salim] Mr. Usamah: I recall that in a previous interview, you said that you would engage in the Palestinian political life, and that participation in the elections was not a prerequisite for involvement in Palestinian political life. How, then, will Hamas involve itself in Palestinian political life?

[Hamdan] I believe that the elected council will be part of overall political life. However, this does not mean that the other parties that have their own views will be banished from political life. We will maintain our candidness and frankness. We will continue to call a spade a spade. We will continue to uphold sound practices and attitudes. Likewise, we will contribute to correcting mistakes in the manner grounded in our values and fraternal relations in the Palestinian community. Additionally, I think that everyone is well aware that wielding political influence is not exclusively confined to elected councils. There will be elections to association bodies, municipal councils, and local government councils. Definitely, the elections to these bodies are part of the political process. We hope that there will be more propitious circumstances so that we may take part in the elections to these councils in a positive manner.

[Salim] Mr. Usamah: So, you will be the opposition on the Palestinian national scene in the liberal sense of the word.

[Hamdan] Yes.

[Salim] The glad tidings that we can break to our people is the fact that there is almost a code of honor between the National Authority and the Hamas Movement prohibiting infighting and upholding the use of a democratic national dialogue to settle differences through respecting dissenting views. This is a positive development. Is it not so?

[Hamdan] I would like to explain an issue. We do not believe that we have agreed on a written code of honor. This requires elaborate drafts and formulations. However, we have reached an understanding on these issues. The press statement that will be issued at the end of the meetings will provide for upholding relevant guidelines on the Palestinian scene. With the continuation of dialogue sessions, we hope that we will agree on clear formulas and mechanisms in this regard. I began by saying that the brothers in the [Palestinian] Authority are required to launch tangible initiatives on the ground to facilitate this. If such initiatives are made, they will be well received by the Hamas Movement, which will make a positive reaction to this.

[Salim] Thank you brother Usamah Hamdan, Hamas delegate to the dialogue with the Palestinian National Authority. May God bless your efforts.

[Hamdan] Thank you.

Statement on Talks Released

NC2212074195 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The delegations of the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] have emphasized the need to cement national unity on the basis that political plurality, a ban on internecine fighting, and the upholding of the principle of dialogue represent the only civilized course for dealing with the various parties in the Palestinian arena. In a joint communique released after their talks in Cairo last night, both delegations stressed the need to prepare the atmosphere to achieve trust and cooperation and consolidate the unity of the Palestinian ranks and attain the national goals.

Both delegations called for exerting every effort to release all POW's and detainees in the Israeli jails. They agreed to form a joint committee to address emerging problems and to continue their meetings to deepen understanding.

The statement noted that what was agreed upon in this round of talks constitutes an important positive step on the path of democratic dialogue. The communique said that both parties discussed all the topics they placed on the agenda—Palestinian national unity and ways of strengthening and safeguarding it, the elections of the Palestinian legislative council, relations between the two parties, and the obligations of the PLO and PA.

The statement pointed out that in light of the dialogue between the two parties on the elections and the PA's obligations, the Hamas Movement reserves its stance on these two issues. No party will be forced to boycott the elections. It confirmed that the Hamas Movement does not aim to embarrass the PA. Both delegations thanked Egypt, President Husni Mubarak, and the Egyptian people and Government for hosting the meeting in Egypt.

The meetings began on Monday [18 December) between the PA led by Salim al-Za'nun and the Hamas Movement led by Khalid Mish'al.

Delegations' Officials Comment

JN2112171995 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] It seems that the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] failed to persuade the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, to participate in the elections scheduled to take place on 20 January, or halt its military action against Israel. This announcement about the failure came with the arrival of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat to Cairo at the end of his Gulf tour. PNA delegation head Salim al-Za'nun admitted failure, saying: We failed to persuade them — that is, Hamas, to go back on their decision to boycott the elections, because they need time to prepare their popular base for such a decision, and this cannot be done in a short space of time.

About the failure of the Cairo meetings, here is a dispatch by our correspondent from Cairo Muna Salim.

[Begin Salim recording] Dialogue between the PLO and Hamas failed after three days of intensive negotiations in Cairo. Khalid Mash'al, head of the Hamas delegation, announced that his movement still adheres to its constant policy of nonparticipation in the Palestinian elections due to take place next month, and will not abandon the strategic option of resistance, as he put it.

Salim al-Za'nun, head of the Palestinian Authority delegation, admitted his delegation did not succeed in persuading Hamas to participate in the elections or abandon armed operations. However, he considered the impermissibility of fighting among Palestinians a significant accomplishment.

A PLO member who requested anonymity said the Khartoum meeting for the Hamas leadership at home and abroad, which preceded the Cairo talks eliminated the possibility of reaching an agreement between the two parties. [end recording]

At the beginning of the talks last Monday, the PNA proposed to Hamas to form a national coalition if Hamas decided to participate in the elections. A member of the Palestinian Authority delegation said the Authority was prepared to allocate Hamas 20 percent of the 83-member self-rule Assembly seats.

For its part, the Hamas Movement does not think the Cairo meeting has failed. Why? Because it was not required that the meeting decide on the issues of armed struggle and participation in the elections. Hamas' position is explained by Khalid Mash'al, who currently heads the movement's delegation to the Cairo talks, as he answers a question by colleague Salim Badawi.

[Begin Mash'al recording] This dialogue was meant to be a step on the way to reaching an understanding and resolving problems that may lead to quarrels and fighting among Palestinians. It was an inevitable step in order to create an atmosphere that would consolidate the national unity of our people and prevent the Zionist enemy from achieving its goals in keeping Palestinians fighting amongst themselves.

I believe that the talks did not fail, because at least they achieved two important goals; the first is that both parties agreed on the need to foster national unity through consolidating its foundations represented in free expression, political action, and pluralism, and in entrenching equality, justice, and creating equal opportunities among the one people without group or factional divisions. This is an important issue.

The other issue is that the spirit that prevailed during the past three days was positive. There was a willingness on both sides to uphold these principles. There is also a desire on both sides to continue the dialogue in the same spirit, even if the programs and views are different. The PNA delegation had its view about the elections and military action, while Hamas had its own. Views were exchanged, and the two sides listened to each other. However, this did not change Hamas's attitudes toward the two issues, because there is a difference in convictions and standpoints.

I believe this dialogue represents a good step forward. This step, God willing, will foster national unity. It may help us arrive at methods and policies that will be adopted by both sides. This will eventually lead to the avoidance of internecine fighting and will strengthen the Palestinian position in confronting an occupation that is still present on Palestinian soil. [end recording]

Officials Cited on Talks 'Failure'

MM2212114495 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by 'Ali al-Salih: "Authority Fails To Persuade Hamas to Participate in Elections, Suspend Military Action"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Cairo, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — [passage omitted] Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], who did not participate in the dialogue, described 'Arafat's nonparticipation in the dialogue with Hamas as "improper." In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Ghawshah said that "'Arafat should have participated and expressed his anger inside the dialogue room." And although Hamas' refusal to participate in the elections, scheduled to be held on

20 January, and its refusal to officially announce its suspension of military action did not surprise anyone, as the movement's delegation has maintained this position since its arrival in Cairo, the Palestinian Authority's delegation had hoped to secure a kind of commitment from Hamas.

However, it can be said that the dialogue succeeded in agreeing on a number of issues, most importantly Hamas' pledge not to stir up problems "liable to obstruct or disrupt the elections, the prohibition of Palestinian infighting, national unity, respect for pluralism, and agreement to continue the dialogue in order to discuss all the issues so that we can secure a better formula for the future," even though no date has been agreed yet for this.

Asked whether the dialogue has failed, Ghawshah said: "It seems that the Authority had hoped to persuade Hamas to change its constant values. For our part, we have not promised anyone anything. Our position is clear, and we have not made any change to it, nor have we changed."

He added: "We have always said that each of us has his own program. Hamas' program has its own clear course, and the Authority's program has its own clear course. But efforts must be made to ensure that the two do not collide and to try to keep them parallel. The Palestinian people cannot abandon the resistance program they have inherited from their forefathers and which they will pass on to their sons. Hamas is committed to this program until the occupation disappears."

Salim al-Za'nun, head of the Authority's delegation, admitted this failure, saying that "we could not persuade them to abandon the decision to boycott the elections."

Nabil 'Amr, official spokesman for the Authority's delegation, admitted to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT the failure to reach an agreement with Hamas on the election issue and the suspension of military operations. He attributed Hamas' refusal to participate in the elections to the fact that the elections are one of the fruits of the Oslo agreement. Nabil 'Amr said that Hamas is still committed to "armed struggle."

Another official from the Authority's delegation, who asked to remain anonymous, has said that "the Khartoum meeting between Hamas' leadership inside [in the self-rule areas] and its leadership abroad prevented any possibility of reaching an agreement."

PA Official: Talks '60% Successful'

NC2112155995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1515 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—Salim al-Za'nun, Palestine National Council deputy chairman and head of the Palestinian Authority's [PA] delegation to talks with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], has stated that a joint committee comprising representatives from the two sides has been formed to follow up on the question of the detainees, those being pursued, as well as relations between the PA and Hamas.

In press remarks this evening, al-Za'nun said: We believe that the talks have been 60 percent successful. We agreed to prohibit internal fighting and exchanged views on several issues. He noted that the Hamas delegation affirmed that the movement will not carry out any actions that conflict with the PA's commitments and that it will not take negative measures against the elections. He pointed out that Hamas' nonparticipation in the elections is an internal affair, and we cannot force anybody to participate in the elections.

Al-Za'nun emphasized that the PA is eager to see all factions taking part in the elections take advantage of the benefits offered by the proportional list system. He noted that the PA had insisted on applying the system of the (?existing) constituencies and not the single constituency system applied in Israel to underline the question of Jerusalem, which will be a constituency on its own and will have its own representatives in the Palestinian Council.

Al-Za'nun noted that future meetings with Hamas are expected, but no date has yet been set for these meetings.

PA Adviser on Boycott Decision

JN2112134895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1210 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Nabil 'Amr, adviser to Palestinian Authority President Yasir 'Arafat and a Palestinian Authority delegate to the dialogue with Hamas in Cairo, by 'Arif Salim in the studio in Jericho; from the "Today's Events" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Salim] Mr. Nabil 'Amr, adviser to his excellency the president: Good afternoon.

['Amr] Good afternoon.

[Salim] Mr. Nabil: On the final day of the national dialogue sessions between the National Authority and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], we would like you to give us news and an analytical update of what has taken place during these sessions.

['Amr] In my opinion, these sessions were useful and extremely important, for they have produced positive results with regard to the constant and regular engagement in dialogue between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority. The fact that we have engaged in dialogue and raised all issues without any rigidity with a view to reaching an agreement is an initial accomplishment on which we can build at present and in the future. If we are to delve into details, we would like to say that Hamas' position on the elections is apparently understandable. Hamas officials do not see any possibility of running in these elections. They have many reasons that prompted their decision in this regard. As a matter of fact, they have informed us of their decision in this regard.

[Salim] Mr. Nabil, permit me to interrupt you by making some remarks on the elections. The Hamas Movement has issued a circular among its followers urging them to register for the elections. Is this an indication that they might run for election as independents, for example?

['Amr] Brother 'Arif, they have informed us that they will not officially take part in the elections in terms of nominations. That is, we will not see Hamas candidates running for election this time. My personal assessment is that they will not undertake any adverse efforts to prevent the Palestinians or the Palestinian political groups from taking part in the election process in complete freedom. It is my belief that this attitude on their part can be deemed positive and cooperative. Hence, we can say that the dialogue has approximated views. With regard to the elections, we are looking forward to quiet and smooth elections. It is our hope that there will be a huge popular turnout, not to allow certain candidates to win or to make others fail, but to serve notice to the world community that the Palestinian people see democracy as their firm option to choose their future political system of government. There is still room for the Hamas Movement and the authority to talk about problematic and controversial issues, such as the Palestinian Authority's obligations, the credibility of the authority, and that of the PLO, etcetera. The Hamas delegates have shown good faith. However, it is not easy for them to make firm decisions on several issues. They need further internal dialogue within their own circles before deciding on such matters. For our part, we understand their need for such dialogue, and hope that we will arrive with them at a deeper understanding in later dialogue sessions, for this is not the last round of dialogue sessions. This is because we will have to coexist on Palestinian territory. Neither we nor they have any choice but to lead amicable and complementary lives, and to share in bearing the burden so that we may achieve our national goals and build our homeland.

[Salim] Yes, that is true. Mr. Nabil: As a matter of fact, I have interviewed brother Usamah Hamdan, representative of the Hamas Movement in Iran, on this issue. I asked him about the possibility of participation in the Palestinian political life through the elections. He answered me by saying that participation in the political life is not necessarily confined to participation in the elections. I gained the impression that there are other ways in which they can take part in the Palestinian political life in Palestine. Have you sensed positive developments in this regard?

['Amr] First, we, as Palestinians, take pride in the fact that the authority is pressing the opposition to vigorously involve itself in the constitutional institutions and the authority's institutions. This is a unique phenomenon in the Third World. At the same time, we understand their willingness to involve themselves at levels other than that of participating in the legislative council. For example, we deem their involvement in associations, in holding public posts, and in committees and councils a prelude that will inevitably lead to full-fledged involvement. They have their own calculations and evaluations. We have to help them reach what is comfortable to them and to their political perspective. We do not seek to create a monopoly of authority. We respect political and intellectual pluralism. Consequently, we believe that the presence of opponents in the institutions would enrich democracy rather than burden it.

Islamic Jihad Member Cited on Ties With Hamas

NC2012120895 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 10 Dec 95 p 12

[Final installment of five-part "exclusive" interview with Muhammad Abu-Jihad, Islamic Jihad representative in Tehran, by unidentified correspondent; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [ETTELA'AT] What is the nature of the relations between Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad and are you coordinating as necessary?

[Abu-Jihad] I would like to mention one point regarding relations between Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Any political action with regard to the current struggles should be viewed against the backdrop of both movements' opposition to the compromise trend deriving from the Oslo agreement. [passage omitted]

We hope the continuous exchanges of our viewpoints and those of other groupings facilitates greater unity, even to the extent of our uniting materially. Another point is the nature of the political action within the area over which the [Palestinian] autonomous government has jurisdiction. In other words, whether the movement will be transformed into a political party in the occupied territories or if its political participation will be confined to the autonomous government's area.

In our capacity as the Islamic Jihad of Palestine—as I mentioned in my interview earlier on the subject of elections—we hold that no independent Palestinian entity can be found in the occupied territories at the current juncture. The framework of Palestinian national sovereignty in the occupied territories is currently subject to the security conditions imposed by Israel and Israel's concept of Palestinian sovereignty in Palestine. Naturally, such a Palestinian entity would be devoid of the necessary decision-making ability in either domestic or foreign affairs. [passage omitted]

We should be aware that our enemy has risen up against us within our country and outside it. The arrest of our brother Abu-Marzuq is a clear example of this fact and of the extent of the violation of Palestinian rights. This is a far-reaching plan aimed at eroding the spirit of resistance and struggle from within. [passage omitted]

New Central Elections Committee Members Named

JN2212103495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His excellency the president [Yasir 'Arafat] last night issued a presidential decree naming new members of the Central Elections Committee chaired by Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin. The committee includes: Lawyer 'Ali al- Safarini, Dr. Gabi Baramikah, Lawyer Tawfiq Abu-Ghazalah, Lawyer Ibrahim al-Saqqah, Dr. Hasan Abu-Libdah, Lamis al-'Alami, Dr. Mundhir Salah, Dr. Muhammad Ishtayya, and Dr. Riyadh al-Khudari.

'Arafat Terms Gulf Tour 'Successful'

JN2112160495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned to the homeland today from Cairo following a Gulf tour that took him to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates [UAE].

During the tour President 'Arafat met with the Qatari and UAE leaders. On the results of his visit, President 'Arafat said:

[Begin 'Arafat recording] The visit was successful, positive, and constructive. During the visit, I held talks in Qatar and the UAE. This was concluded by a visit and an important meeting with President Mubarak in Cairo. I can say that the talks covered several economic issues. We also discussed joint cooperation in all fields. [end recording]

Regarding the Israeli occupation forces' redeployment and withdrawal from Bethlehem which is scheduled today, President 'Arafat said that this is proceeding in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President 'Arafat's adviser, has said that President 'Arafat will meet with French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette at the Presidency in Gaza tomorrow, Friday. He pointed out that President 'Arafat and the French foreign minister will discuss the latest developments in the peace process, Palestinian-French relations, and means of promoting them.

Abu-Rudaynah, who described Palestinian-French relations as good, stressed that President 'Arafat will discuss with de Charette ways of rendering the donor states' conference a success. The conference is scheduled to be held in Paris on 9 January.

'Huge' Celebrations Follow Bethlehem 'Liberation'

JN2212102595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Huge celebrations are currently under way in the city of Bethlehem on the occasion of the liberation of the city and the departure of the last soldiers of the occupation for good. Bethlehem has thus joined the rest of the liberated Palestinian cities, which include Gaza, Jericho, Janin, Tulkarm, Nabulus, and Qalqilyah.

Palestinian national security forces entered Bethlehem this evening amid popular celebrations and national slogans. The forces took over the headquarters of what was known as the occupation's administration and the police headquarters in the city.

President Yasir 'Arafat is expected to take part in Christmas celebrations, which will be held for the first time under the Palestinian National Authority and with the participation of many international, Arab, and religious figures. The celebrations, which will take place on 24 December, are also expected to be attended by 10,000 foreign tourists. Sa'id 'Ayyad has more details from Bethlehem:

[Begin 'Ayyad recording] Good evening. At 2000 today, the first batch of national security forces entered the governorate building in Bethlehem. Officers and soldiers assumed their duties while thousands of citizens gathered at major squares to celebrate the liberation of the city. A second group of forces is expected to enter before midnight. Other forces took over the police headquarters in Nativity Square once the occupation forces evacuated at 1700. Citizens destroyed the fence around the headquarters.

At 0900 tomorrow, two official celebrations will be held to raise the Palestinian flag over the governorate's headquarters and the police building. In addition, the flag will be raised later over police headquarters in Bayt Sahur, Bayt Jala, and [Suqu'].

Popular celebrations at Nativity Square have continued on this great national occasion. Officials in the Fatah Movement and the Popular Committee said the celebrations will continue tomorrow. [end recording]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Syria-Israel 'Breakthrough' 'Maybe Next Month'

MM2212110395 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Dec 95 pp 1, 6

[Report by Walid Shuqayr: "Breakthrough on Syrian Track Soon; Information About Settlement of Four Points"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut — Well-informed diplomatic sources expect the rapidly arranged Syrian-Israeli meetings to be held in Washington as of 27 December to bring about a breakthrough on the Syrian track soon, maybe next month. Other sources expect Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi to visit Damascus within days to coordinate with Syrian officials over new developments.

The sources told AL-HAYAH that the U.S. Administration sees Israel's flexibility as regards Syria's commitment to normal peace relations with the Hebrew state as a reason to expect a breakthrough within the next few weeks, not in the spring as originally expected. The sources added that the U.S. Administration now believes that the negotiations could progress rapidly on the Syrian track in a manner that inspires hope of a peace agreement being signed between the two countries by the end of the spring or the beginning of the summer.

The sources pointed out that the main point which has prompted this expectation is the fact that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres expressed in front of President Clinton his full willingness to tackle all points of disagreement with Syria, which suspended the negotiations before the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's murder, in a manner acceptable to Damascus. The sources said that the main points are as follows:

1. The U.S.-Israeli negotiations led to discussion of the possibility of adopting the option of air surveillance of military movements on both sides of the border after Washington expressed understanding of Syria's proposal for this to be an alternative to ground early-warning stations. The sources said that the U.S. side pledged to make efforts to provide air surveillance means for both sides, through either two AWACS aircraft, military surveillance balloons, or high-speed reconnaissance aircraft which photograph the minutest of details on the ground.

2. The U.S. side conveyed to the Syrian side Israel's willingness to agree to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 lines when the negotiations are resumed.

3. Shortening the withdrawal period, as Peres informed the Americans of his willingness to withdraw as soon as possible and at once, as of the date set for the withdrawal.

4. Peres stressed to the Americans that he has no problem as regards the form of the negotiations and that all he is interested in is to tackle the points of disagreement and then upgrade the negotiations to the highest possible level, because he wishes to meet with President al-Asad.

The sources said that the Americans had not expected such facilities from Peres and that the Syrians considered these a significant breakthrough. However, the sources said that Peres requested a clear Syrian commitment in return, namely to discuss normal peace relations, diplomatic exchanges, and normalization, in addition to calm in southern Lebanon. The Syrian side agreed to the principle of discussing the issue of normal relations between the two countries, in the framework drawn up through U.S.-Israeli and U.S.-Syrian contacts. The sources said that President al-Asad proposed that the Syrian and Israeli delegations discuss details and ways of implementing the points in question. The sources considered Minister al-Shar''s recent statements in Beirut about calm in southern Lebanon as a response to what has been proposed. The sources expect a statement to be issued next month on what could be achieved in some areas of the negotiations, including upgrading the level of representation, maybe to foreign minister level, in order to make use of the time before spring and to complete negotiations over other details. If this process succeeds, an expanded international Arab-Israeli meeting would be arranged to sign a Syrian-Israeli agreement. AL-HAYAH has learned that the anticipated acceleration — if the atmosphere of optimism reigning in the circles concerned with the negotiations continues — should lead to an imminent reactivation of the Lebanese track. But nothing has been said yet pending the Washington meetings.

Well-informed sources have told AL-HAYAH that this acceleration will lead to Syrian-Iranian contacts soon. The sources expect Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi to visit Damascus within days to coordinate with Syrian officials and learn from them about recent developments. The sources said that the current visit to Tehran by a Hizballah delegation falls in the framework of coordination between Hizballah and senior Iranian officials before Habibi's visit to Damascus.

Israel, PA Disagree on Jerusalem Area Villages

TA2212055395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] are in disagreement over the status of villages in the Jerusalem area. Last night, at the meeting of the Israeli-Palestinian steering committee, Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] demanded that Israel immediately withdraw from Abu-Dis and Sawahirah. He charged that both were in the Bethlehem region and their status was similar to towns.

Israeli sources said that there is a mistake regarding both Abu-Dis and Sawahirah on the maps attached to the agreement, and Israel expects the Palestinians to agree to correct this.

Algeria

FIS: Haddam 'Still Committed to GIA Framework'

MM2212120095 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Dec 95 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Algerian Salvation Front: Haddam's Dissociation 'Late Awakening'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] Executive Committee Abroad, headed by Shaykh Rabah Kebir, has described as a "late awakening" the statement issued by Anouar Haddam, head of the FIS Parliamentary Mission, who lives in Washington, in which he dissociated himself from the Armed Islamic Group [GIA], which he accused of killing Mohamed Said and Abderrezak Redjam, former FIS members who joined the GIA last year.

The AL-SABIL bulletin, which is issued by FIS supporters and reflects the views of the Executive Committee headed by Kebir, said: "We had expected Haddam to dissociate himself from the GIA as a framework adopting a deviationist line that sanctions the killing of Muslims, not just to dissociate himself from the current GIA leadership." The bulletin adds in today's issue that "it seems from the statement that Haddam is still committed to the GIA framework."

The bulletin stressed that "organizationally, Haddam is not entitled to speak or make statements on behalf of the FIS, because he is not authorized to do so." It goes on: "Thus his (Haddam's) statements have nothing to do with the truth and the reality when he speaks about the FIS provisional executive bureau." The bulletin stresses what Djafar Houari, member of the FIS Executive Committee, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT last Tuesday.

Pro-FIS Bulletin Critical of Haddam Remarks on GIA

MM2112123095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 Dec 95 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Bulletin Close to Islamic Salvation Front Criticizes Haddam"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — The AL-RIBAT bulletin, close to the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] Executive Committee, has criticized Anouar Haddam, head of the FIS Parliamentary Mission, despite his announcement two days ago that he dissociates himself from the Armed Islamic Group [GIA].

The bulletin, of which AL-HAYAH received a copy yesterday, commented on the fact that Haddam holds "extremists" — who, according to him, control the GIA — responsible for the assassination of shaykhs Mohamed Said and Abderrezak Redjam last month in Algeria. The bulletin said: "Haddam pointed in his recent statement to the GIA's deviation and error...but the question is: Did this group become unjust and deviate at the time of the assassination of those brothers (Said and Radjam and a number of their supporters)? Was the group not unjust when it assassinated Shaykh Abdelbeki Sahraoui? Was it not unjust when it killed brother (preacher) Bouslimani last year and brothers Ezzeddine Baa and Abdelnasser Tetraoui? Was the group not deviant and tyrannical when it burned schools and gas stations and unjustly extorted the storekeepers' money?"

It went on: "Why the silence on these transgressions, brother? Why were these crimes always justified, while you had one foot in the GIA camp and one foot in the FIS? Why did you unjustly and cunningly say that the GIA is the only jihad framework when there is a (jihad) framework uniting the faithful...which is the Islamic Salvation Army?"

The bulletin urged him to name the FIS Provisional National Executive Bureau members, for whom he speaks, as he said in his recent statement. It stressed that the FIS works in the political field in Algeria under the leadership of the seven shaykhs (Abassi Madani, Ali Belhadj, Abdelkader Hachani, Ali Djedi, Kemal Kamazi, Abdelkader Boukhamkham, and Abdelkader Omar), and in the jihad under Shaykh Madani Mezrak's [Islamic Salvation Army leader] leadership. It said that it works abroad through the Executive Council (which is headed by Shaykh Rabah Kebir and has 10 members).

Egypt

Musa Comments on Mubarak-'Arafat Talks

NC2112142795 Cairo MENA in English 1333 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 21 (MENA)— Talks held today between President Husni Mubarak and Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat dealt with a number of issues, including the situation as regards implementation of the Taba agreement and the Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian towns, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today said following the Mubarak-'Arafat meeting.

An agreement was reached on carrying live Palestinian celebrations to be held in Bethlehem on the occasion of Christmas, he said.

The celebrations will be held for the first time under the supervision of the Palestinian National Authority, he added.

Egyptian media will contribute to televising those celebrations, he said.

The implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement proceeds in a good way, so does the withdrawal of the Israeli forces, he added.

Musa said President Mubarak and the Palestinian leader reviewed conditions in the Middle East.

'Arafat briefed President Mubarak on his recent talks in the Gulf area, said the foreign minister.

The two leaders reviewed arrangements for the January 20 Palestinian elections and underway Palestinian-Palestinian talks held in preparation for the elections.

Egyptian observers will take part in monitoring the Palestinian elections, the first on Palestinian land since a long time ago, Musa said.

He put the number of Egyptian observers at 20.

The foreign minister said Egypt did not intervene in talks between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority. It is a Palestinian-Palestinian matter and Egypt was not asked to intervene, he said.

During his visit to Egypt, 'Arafat did not meet the Hamas delegation for the talks because of lack of time.

Musa said his talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq here on Saturday [23 December] will focus on the Arab-Israeli peace talks along with other matters.

On the flow of assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Musa said the Palestinians believe that the aid is not enough. The general feeling nowadays is that conditions are now far better than before and that things are taking a turn to the better, he said.

On the Syrian-Israeli track, Musa said there is some progress in the Israeli stands and there are new ideas. Let's wait until the Syrian-Israeli talks resume in Washington on December 27, he said. Musa, asked whether the Palestinians fear that progress on the Syrian track would undermine their own, track with Israel denied such claims. Matters must be placed within their own perspective and progress on any of the tracks would serve the other and not clash with it, Musa said. There is no contradiction and such viewpoint is wrong, he added. Comprehensive peace is the aim, and the process has therefore to encompass all tracks, he said. Musa added that he wanted to clarify that the Arab-Israeli conflict will end when the Palestinian people begin to exercise their right to self-determination, a provision for the establishment of the Palestinian state, he added.

The final phase of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will begin in May, Musa said. These will be crucial talks, since a final settlement means reaching an understanding on the four Mideast peace tracks, and not just one, two, or mere three, he added.

Musa called for the activation of the Lebanese track, since Lebanon is an independent country with its own sovereignty and enjoys a special relationship with Syria. There are Lebanese hopes, rights and aspirations, things that have to be debated between Lebanese and Israeli officials in accordance with the Madrid formula, he added.

Musa Denies Accusing Israel of Aiding Eritrea

NC2112153595 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has denied remarks which AFP wrongly attributed to him today that Israel has participated in one way or another in the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict over the Hanish al-Kabir Island in the Red Sea.

Musa announced that AFP's attribution of such remarks to him is this news agency's own invention.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister has submitted a formal protest to AFP because it attributed to Musa a statement which he had not made.

Cairo Maintains Stance on Yemen-Eritrea Dispute

*NC2212083395 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0607 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-AHRAM asserts that the dispute between Yemen and Eritrea over al-Hanish al-Kabir Island involves an extremely sensitive area, where Africa and Asia meet. Arab and African interests in this region mingle with the interests of foreign parties, which are trying to find a foothold in the heart of the Red Sea. In its editorial today, the paper says it is strange that this dispute should arise at such a historical time, in which old and complicated disputes and crises should get a negotiated settlement. A military solution is considered out of place and not a suitable mechanism acceptable to the international community.

AL-AHRAM adds: No one knows how to justify this dispute, as if the region needs further futile crises that only serve to disturb relations between the two parties to the conflict and relations among all the region's countries. This situation, which will harm the region, is not consistent with current developments. The paper notes Egypt's call for settling this dispute peacefully and maintains that this call reflects the constants of Egyptian policy on the subject of "conflict." Egypt is committed to this policy on any problem, no matter the parties involved or the level of conflict.

Commentary: Sudan Must Hand Over Suspects to Ethiopia

NC2112154895 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Commentary by Muhammad Sharaf: "The Sudanese Regime's Sponsorship of Terrorism is a Crime Against Africa and the Entire World Community"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Egypt views as a totally serious matter the Sudanese Government's refusal to hand over the suspects in the attempt on President Husni Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia, on whose territory the offense was carried out, judges that its sovereignty was violated by the Sudanese regime, especially after investigations have proven that this regime was involved in the crime. Where Egypt is concerned, the issue is much more serious because it involved a blatant attempted assault on its president. The crime also revealed that the Sudanese regime is seeking to undermine Egyptian security and stability. Add to this the confessions and clues that the Egyptian security services have amassed about the Sudanese regime's provision of asylum to terrorists who operate against Egypt and its training, financing, and helping them to infiltrate into Egyptian territory carrying weapons and terrorist plans to sabotage the Egyptian citizens' safety. The gravity of the Khartoum regime's policy against Egypt is hence evident.

So much for Egypt. Another and no less serious aspect is the danger to other African countries, particularly Sudan's neighbors, inherent in the Sudanese Government's policies and practices. It is an accepted fact that the Sudanese regime is accused by nearly all its neighbors of pursuing hostile policies toward them. Its only excuse is that it is ignorant of international principles and conventions that govern relations between countries and their respective rights and duties. Observance of these principles is necessary for security and a sound international system of relations. [passage omitted]

Egyptian self-restraint and patience vis-a-vis the Sudanese regime stem from its concern for the interests of the Sudanese people who certainly do not approve of their regime's unjustified hostility toward Egypt, but this self-restraint does not signify that it is ready to disregard its own people's safety and stability. Egypt insists that the Sudanese Government hand over the persons suspected of involvement in the Addis Ababa crime. It believes that it is even more important for the Sudanese Government to exonerate itself of charges of terrorism and prove its innocence with concrete evidence. [passage omitted]

Official reports and announcements show that the Ethiopian Government is inclined to take the matter to the UN Security Council if Khartoum refuses to settle the dispute in an African context. The Khartoum regime must naturally bear the consequences of its defiance of Africa and the world community. [passage omitted]

Interior Minister on Violence During Elections

NC2112215995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has said that the reason for the failure of the Islamic trend's candidates in the elections was Egyptians' rejection of Muslim Brotherhood candidates who documents and evidence have proved have close links to terrorist groups and their criminal attempts.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM to be published tomorrow, Friday, al-Alfi denied that the Islamic trend failed because there were instructions not to let this trend succeed.

He asserted that the total number of victims of violence in electoral districts did not exceed 36 killed and 411 wounded. He added that this figure could have been double had the interior ministry not withdrawn 12,000 weapons and canceled 2,196 licenses.

The interior minister also stressed that no representative of any candidate in any committee was detained or arrested. He said that those arrested were thugs and dangerous criminals. The security services had information that these elements were planning to attack some committees and smash ballot boxes.

He stressed that no more than 159 were arrested, adding that they have already been referred to the prosecution office. He said that all of them were veteran criminals and elections' thugs and are still imprisoned. He noted that others were arrested but released.

At the same time, the interior minister admitted that there were some violations by policemen who supported some candidates. He said that 16 officers and six policemen were immediately referred to the prosecution office. He added: If the investigations prove that they did commit any crime, then they will be brought before the criminal court and those charged with administrative crimes will be disciplined.

Morocco

Filali Protests Algeria's 'Radical Change'

LD2112223195 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Abdellatif Filali has sent a letter to Algerian Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembri in which he stressed that the Algerian Government's stance regarding the UN secretary general's proposal aimed at speeding up the identity determination process [of those eligible to vote in Western Saharan referendum] constituted an astonishing radical change that would have consequences on developments in the Sahara issue and Maghreb relations.

Abdellatif Filali said that with the letter sent by the Algerian foreign minister to the chairman of the UN Security Council on 6 December, Algeria exceeded its position as an observer and essentially changed the stance its government had shown to have accepted and adopted. In fact, Algeria had abandoned its position as an observer to appoint itself clearly as a party directly involved in the Sahara issue.

Filali stressed that the Moroccan Government believed the time had come for it to receive an explanation and a clarification about the radical change that had occurred in the Algerian stance. Morocco demanded pressingly from Algeria, which currently chaired the Arab Maghreb Union, to stop the activities of the Maghreban institutions temporarily, since it was obvious that what was required to continue could not be built on ambiguity.

Sudan

Military Spokesman Condemns Eritrean 'Aggression'

EA2112174095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Armed Forces' official spokesman and director of the moral guidance department, Major General Muhammad 'Abd-al-Qadir, has stressed that military operations in the south of the country and along the narrow strip where Uganda penetrated were going according to plan. The People's Armed Forces and the People's Defense Forces (PDF) were operating together to cleanse the pockets that were made filthy by the aggressors, he said.

In a statement to the radio reporter, His Excellency emphasized that operations would continue until every inch of this land was cleansed. His Excellency pointed out that the south of the country would remain a secure and stable place and the peace that had been achieved would remain, despite the conspiracies being hatched against the country and its civilized course. He said this peace would soon be crowned with more victories until the peace-from- within projects were complete. [passage omitted]

In reply to a question about the recent occupation of the Yemeni island of greater Hanish in the Red Sea by forces of the Eritrean regime, His Excellency said this aggression was unacceptable and the escalation of military activities threatened the security of the horn of Africa region.

Iranian, Arab Pilots Said Bombing Rebels in South

NC2112173195 Cairo MENA in English 1700 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Nairobi, Dec 21 (MENA)—The secretary general of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Sudan has said that Iran and two Asian Arab states have launched an airlift to supply Khartoum with weapons and ammunition in a bid to save the ruling regime there from collapse in the wake of successive defeats at the hands of the movement's forces recently in the East Tropical region.

In press statements today, the movement's secretary general said that Iranian and Arab pilots are taking part in bombing raids by MIG and Antinov aircraft against some targets in South Sudan. He described the Khartoum regime as corrupt and oppressive.

'Aziz Meets With French Officials in Paris

'Constructive' Meeting With Juppe

JN2112072095 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz held lengthy talks with French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette despite the fact that 'Aziz is currently on a private visit to Paris. 'Aziz arrived in Paris from New York. [passage omitted]

In New York last Tuesday, Tariq 'Aziz said Iraq is not likely to accept Resolution 986, which, he said, prejudices Iraq's sovereignty. However, following his talks with Herve de Charette, 'Aziz said: I listened carefully to the French view. I do not want to make hasty statements. We have to study thoroughly the new statements by UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali before giving any reply. After meeting Herve de Charette, 'Aziz also met with French Prime Minister Alain Juppe.

France is eager to see Iraq reoccupy its position in the international family. Therefore, talks between French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz focused on the need for Iraq to accept Security Council Resolution 986, which Baghdad says prejudices its national sovereignty. Paris, however, does not see any justification for this Iraqi caution. Herve de Charette said Iraq's acceptance of this resolution does not contradict the implementation of Resolution 687. Observers see some Iraqi flexibility in this regard. 'Aziz promised that Iraq would think about this.

The Iraqi official expressed fears that Resolution 986 might be considered a substitute for Resolution 687, which calls for lifting the international embargo on Iraq in light of Iraq's cooperation with the United Nations, particularly the UN Special Commission overseeing Iraqi disarmament, chaired by Rolf Ekeus.

French Prime Minister Alain Juppe also received Tariq 'Aziz for almost an hour. When he emerged from the meeting, we asked the Iraqi official whether he discussed with Juppe a possible French role to soften the U.S. stance toward the international embargo on Iraq. 'Aziz said:

[Begin 'Aziz recording] Let me put things in this context. I had a discussion with the prime minister. I knew the prime minister and had contacts with him when he was foreign minister. In this meeting, we discussed the situation at the Security Council. I explained to him our position, what we have done, and what we will do. The meeting was cordial and constructive. I am satisfied with this meeting. [end recording]

Meets French Senators, Figures

JN2112173795 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1510 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 21 Dec (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz met here today with a large number of French political and parliamentary personalities and members of the French Senate, including former French Defense Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement and former French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson.

During these meetings, 'Aziz reviewed in detail the damage resulting from the unjust blockade imposed on Iraq, which has also affected many states, particularly France. He stressed the need for lifting this blockade as soon as possible.

The French personalities stressed the need to resume relations between Iraq and France and return them to normal in a way that serves the national interests of both friendly countries and peoples.

Libyan Minister Meets With Government Officials

Meets Trade, Oil Ministers

JN2112182295 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video; from the "Evening Newspaper" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih has met with 'Izz-al-Din al-Hinshiri, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for communications and transport.

During the meeting they reviewed economic and trade relations between the two fraternal countries and ways of promoting them.

In another development, Oil Minister Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid today met with al-Hinshiri, who is also the head of the Libyan side in the Iraqi-Libyan Joint Cooperation Committee.

During the meeting the oil minister stressed Iraq's interest in promoting cooperation with the Libyan Jamahiriyah in the oil field as well as exchanging expertise and knowledge to serve the interests of both fraternal countries.

Rashid said that despite the continued unjust blockade, Iraq has managed to develop the oil sector, secure what is needed to keep it going and meet citizens' needs for petroleum products. He added: Oil production has even increased as compared with previous production before the blockade was imposed.

During the meeting the two sides discussed ways to promote cooperation in the fields of oil and oil industries. They also discussed the exchange of expertise and the training of cadres to serve the interests of both sisterly countries.

The meeting was attended by Fa'iz 'Abdallah al-Shahin, Oil Ministry under secretary; Dayf 'Abd-al-Majid Ahmad, deputy head of the Military Industrialization Organization; the Iraqi ambassador to Libya; and the Libyan ambassador to Iraq.

Signs Joint Accord

JN2212111195 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq and Libya signed this evening the minutes of joint cooperation and a number of agreements that serve the economic, trade, scientific, media, cultural, and technical relations. The agreements were signed at the end of the meetings of the first round of the joint Iraqi-Libyan committee that were held at the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

On the Iraqi side, the minutes and agreements were signed by Dr. Ahmad Murtada Ahmad, transport and communications minister. On the Libyan side, they were signed by Engineer 'Izz-al-Din al-Hinshiri, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for communications and transport.

The minutes stipulate the need for strengthening cooperation in the cultural, media, educational, scientific, economic, and youth areas. It also envisages organizing the exchange of expertise in the area of working force, particularly in regard to training cadres. It also deals with cooperation in higher and vocational education and exchange of visits among [word indistinct] in the trade and educational fields with the aim of familiarization and making use of the two fraternal countries' capabilities.

The signing ceremony was attended by a number of officials in the two countries' ministries and the Iraqi and Libyan ambassadors in Tripoli and Baghdad.

Concludes Visit, Departs

JN2212112095 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1005 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad, 22 Dec (INA) — Engineer 'Izz- al-Din al-Hinshiri, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for Communications and Transport, and his accompanying delegation left Baghdad today at the conclusion of a three-day visit to Iraq. [passage omitted]

National Assembly Law Approved at RCC-Ba'th Party Meeting

JN2112155695 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1520 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has presided over a joint meeting of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party. During the meeting, the National Assembly Law was approved.

Ahmad Husayn, head of the Presidential Office, attended the meeting.

Sne Denies Involvement in Yemen-Eritrea Conflict

TA2112144495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1305 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Health Minister Efrayim Sne, place not given, by Gid'on Remez in Tel Aviv on 21 December; from the "Foreign Newsreel" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Remez] When we talked earlier this week about the confrontation between Yemen and Eritrea over the large island of Greater Haws at the mouth of the Bab el-Mandeb Straits, which lead to the Indian Ocean, it was described as a local problem, mainly over potential tourism and fishing. Later, Yemen claimed that it was a military action perpetrated with the aid of or perhaps initiated by Israel. Yemen claimed that Israeli officers led the offensive — even naming one officer — and that the coastal vessels used by Eritrea are Israeli-made. In Jerusalem, the Foreign Ministry issued a denial to foreign correspondents. Health Minister Efrayim Sne, who is also a doctor and a brigadier general in the reserves, is the only Israeli minister to have visited Eritrea. Good day, Minister Sne.

[Sne] Good day.

[Remez] I assume that your visit dealt mainly with cooperation in the health field, but I believe that there was a defense aspect to that as well. I recall a delegation coming from Eritrea to rehabilitate war casualties here.

[Sne] That is correct. There has been cooperation, which I expanded during my visit to Eritrea about three months ago. We are now setting up an intensive care unit in the Eritrean capital. We also sent teams of doctors and nurses to train them. Their medical system is very backward, and we are helping them as best we can to build it up to a reasonable level. In general, Eritrea has great admiration for, appreciation of, and expectations from Israel.

[Remez] I recall a very similar conversation we had several months ago after your visit to Azerbaijan. Interestingly enough, at that time, too, there were reports — in that case from Iranian sources — about defense cooperation. You did not want to go into it, but you confirmed that we have a strategic interest in Azerbaijan. Is the same true for Eritrea?

[Sne] It is true that Eritrea is a friendly state whose location on the Red Sea coast and the straits leading out of it makes it a very strategic country, from our point of view, in terms of freedom of shipping. It is an important country on the Horn of Africa, which is in constant confrontation with extreme Islamic fundamentalism originating in Sudan, which, as is known, is Iran's ally. Eritrea is definitely a friendly state, and it is important for us to have friendly ties with it. That does not mean that I accept or confirm what is being disseminated by various elements about our alleged assistance to them in a military campaign. Nonetheless, it is definitely a state that is important to us.

[Remez] Your hosts were obviously aware of your military rank. Did they also appeal to you for military cooperation?

[Sne] We did not deal with defense issues. We dealt with our relations in general and the health field specifically, which was the reason for my visit.

[Remez] Cannot stressing our positive ties with Eritrea harm the cultivation of what recently appeared to be quite strong signals from Yemen in Israel's direction?

[Sne] The State of Israel does not take any side in any regional conflict but offers friendship and, within our capabilities, also aid to those who want it and are willing to accept it. Just as we did not adopt a position on the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia, we are also not a party to the conflict between Yemen and Eritrea. We will, of course, welcome anybody who wants good relations with us. Our ties with Eritrea are special because it received independence only two years ago and is trying to build itself up after a devastating civil war. [passage omitted]

French Foreign Minister de Charette Arrives

TA2112160995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette has arrived in Israel for a three-day official visit. After his arrival this afternoon, he met in Tel Aviv with Minister Yosi Beilin and is holding talks with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq this evening.

Comments on Syria, Iraq, Algeria

TA2212115495 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Dec 95 p A5

[Interview with French Freign Minister Herve de Charette by Aluf Ben; in Israel on 21 December — first two paragraphs are HA'ARETZ introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] "France greatly appreciates the courage and vision of the Israeli Government and public in pursuing the path of peace in the Middle East." This was stated yesterday by French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette in an interview with HA'ARETZ upon his arrival in Israel. The visiting minister said his main aim is to advance French-Israeli relations.

De Charette expressed condolences on Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination and emphasized the French nation's deep sympathy with Israel. He wished success to Shim'on Peres, whom he has met several times since entering office seven months ago. "I admire his power of persuasion, his faith, his profound knowledge of the Middle East, and his great determination."

[Ben] Do you think France has a new role to play in the peace process?

[De Charette] We are ready to offer whatever help we can for advancing the last stage of the peace process with Syria and, it is hoped, shortly with Lebanon as well. France is willing to contribute toward enabling Lebanon to develop and prosper under conditions that will ensure its independence.

[Ben] Last week you hosted Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam in Paris. What have you heard from him?

[De Charette] In this meeting I got the feeling that Syria is sincere about its attitude toward peace, and this constitutes a real change. If it turns out to be true that the Syrian Government has reconsidered the situation and has embraced a new direction, this will constitute a real message.

[Ben] How does France regard the proposal that an agreement with Lebanon be included in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations?

[De Charette] This is not how I view the situation. Lebanon is an independent country and this is how it should be treated.

De Charette emphasized that France will do everything it is asked in order to help the sides attain a real, just, and durable peace. He claims that "France and Europe have a vital interest in the success of the peace process. The stability of the entire region is linked to security in the Middle East, and as a Mediterranean country we feel directly involved in the Middle East situation."

[Ben] Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz recently visited France. Is there any initiative to alleviate the sanctions on Iraq?

[De Charette] Indeed I hosted Tariq 'Aziz in Paris, as I announced to our main partners, including Israel. I did this with one clear aim in mind: to convince the Iraqi authorities of the vital need to accept UN Security Council Resolution 986, which deals with the humanitarian situation in Iraq (the resolution permits Iraq to export a certain amount of oil and use the income for humanitarian ends. Saddam Husayn has rejected it). We are very concerned about the situation in Iraq, and I wanted to tell 'Aziz that the resolution must be accepted in order to alleviate the difficulties of the Iraqi nation. Naturally we stressed that Iraq should honor all the Security Council resolutions and cooperate with the UN overseers headed by Rolf Ekeus.

[Ben] What response did you get from 'Aziz?

[De Charette] I could see that things are developing and changing. Over the last few months the Iraqi authorities have rejected every proposal aimed at implementing Resolution 986, but I feel there is some openness now.

[Ben] How do you feel about King Husayn's plan of turning Iraq into a confederacy, a plan also supported by Peres?

[De Charette] I would not like to intervene in Iraq's domestic political affairs. Our desire, as well as that of the international community, is to bring about the implementation of the Security Council resolutions. This is what I am striving for.

[Ben] What are your impressions of the elections in Algeria?

[De Charette] The presidential elections passed well with an impressive participation. The Algerian people gave President Liamine Zeroual a huge majority, a thing that gave him both domestic and international legitimacy.

[Ben] Will you invite Zeroual for a meeting with Chirac in Paris, seeing that their planned meeting in the United Nations two months ago was canceled?

[De Charette] Our relations with Algeria are relations between states, and there is no need to speak obsessively of this or that meeting. We have deep economic and cultural ties with Algeria. The president of the French Parliament left on a visit to Algiers yesterday at the invitation of his Algerian counterpart, and there will be more visits.

[Ben] How do you get to work in the morning?

[De Charette] In the last two days traffic has been running smoothly in Paris.

Comments on Syrian Talks

TA2212073695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli delegation to the talks with Syria that will start near Washington on 27 December has been enlarged to five members and will also include IDF [Israel Defense Forces] representatives. French Foreign Minister de Charette last night told Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq that the Syrians claim to seek peace. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports from the studio:

[Raz] The remarks I heard from de Charette indicate that he was very cautious in briefing Ehud Baraq on the talks with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam in Paris. We had doubts regarding the Syrian intentions, but we felt they were making an effort to convince us of their earnestness, de Charette said, adding that he was not saying that the Syrians desire peace, but rather that this was what the Syrians were saying.

[Begin recording] [Baraq] There is mainly an impression of a different atmosphere, one that is more open and warmer, one that conveys a sense of optimism. The question of whether it warrants a response, and whether it suffices to bridge the gaps between us, is naturally premature, as it can only be discussed by us and the Syrians in the contacts we are about to launch and of which the French foreign minister and his aides are aware.

[De Charette, in English] The discussion was very deep, very interesting for us, and give to me the impression that the Syrian authorities really will to progress. [end recording]

[Raz translates the above and continues] De Charette reported that the Syrians are unequivocal on one matter: They will not have Israeli early warning stations on Golan territories evacuated by Israel.

As for Lebanon, the French foreign minister's wariness was more explicit. 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam said in Paris that Syria favors an independent Lebanon, but de Charette found that unconvincing.

Contacts held by the Americans yesterday revealed that owing to the parties' desire to expand the range of issues to be discussed near Washington, there was mutual consent to expand the delegations. The following people will represent Israel at these talks: Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir, coordinator of the peace talks on behalf of Israel; Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to Washington; Foreign Ministry Legal Adviser Yo'el Singer, whose appointment indicates that legal formulations may be on the agenda; and two IDF [Israel Defense Forces] representatives: Colonel Mikha'el Herzog from the IDF Planning Branch and Lieutenant Colonel Moshe Sinai, also from the Planning Branch but on long-standing detail to the Foreign Ministry.

Both Israel and apparently Syria plan to discuss the negotiating procedures, the agenda, and a wide range of issues in a more orderly and definitive fashion at the talks starting 27 December.

To Visit Orient House

TA2212113495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette has rejected Israeli solicitations against his visit to Orient House tomorrow. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that in the course of the preparatory contacts that preceded his visit, Israeli elements tried to persuade the French to give up the Orient House visit, but the appeal was denied.

Mr. Peres met with Minister de Charette in Tel Aviv this morning, and they discussed ways to tighten relations between the two countries. Our correspondent Dan Eshel reports that the French foreign minister said at his meeting with Mr. Peres that his country can assist with future Israeli-Syrian-Lebanese arrangements. Minister de Charette told the prime minister that Syrian Vice President Khaddam, with whom he met in Cairo [as heard; venue was Paris] this week, had stressed Syria's willingness to conduct speedier negotiations than any held so far.

'Sources' Expect Simultaneous U.S, Syria Treaties

TA2212101395 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 22 Dec 95 p 5

[Report by Ben Kaspit and Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Political sources in Jerusalem say that if a peace agreement with Syria is attained, Israel will simultaneously sign a security agreement with the United States. It is still not clear whether this will be done in the form of an official defense treaty or some lesser form of agreement.

The Israeli delegation for the talks, headed by peace talks coordinator Uri Savir, will depart for Washington Sunday, 24 December. The Israeli team, which will also include Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and Foreign Ministry Legal Adviser Yo'el Singer, will use Monday and Tuesday for consultations in anticipation of the negotiations slated to start on Wednesday [27 December].

Israeli political sources told MA'ARIV that even if a significant breakthrough is achieved with Syria, the chances of completing the negotiations and signing a peace treaty between the sides before the elections are not high.

This assessment is based on the Israeli intention to add to the potential peace treaty with Syria a security agreement with the United States. Israel will request that this agreement include intelligence cooperation, putting U.S. spy satellites at the disposal of Israeli early warning measures on the Golan Heights, supplying it with sophisticated spy aircraft, as well as other measures.

[A related report on page 1 of the same MA'ARIV edition by Ben Kaspit and Hemi Shalev adds: "Several of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' associates are in favor of signing a defense agreement with the United States, but Peres himself has not decided yet."]

The negotiations at Wye Plantation in Maryland will be conducted in two contiguous, three-day sessions. Israel is encouraged by President al-Asad's promise to give Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian delegation, "broad leeway" for conducting the negotiations.

Political sources describe al-Mu'allim as "one of the closest persons to al-Asad" and as someone who enjoys the Syrian president's full confidence. [passage omitted]

IDF Turns Bethlehem Over to Palestinians

TA2112164495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Bethlehem was handed over to the Palestinians this afternoon. At a short ceremony, Major General Gabi Ofir turned the military government building over to the Palestinian Police commander, following which the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers departed and local Palestinians launched a celebration.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that 80 members of the Palestinian Police deployed in the military government building and the police station in Manger Square. The main Palestinian Police force, consisting of approximately 200 policemen, will arrive in Bethlehem at midnight.

As IDF vehicles were leaving the military government compound, hundreds of local residents shouted nationalistic slogans at them, but the Palestinian police were there to make sure that the soldiers were not harmed. The locals knocked down the fence around the military government compound, climbed to the building roof, and hoisted the Palestinian flag.

Gen. Gabi Ofir told our correspondent that the evacuation proceeded in an orderly fashion and that the Palestinian Police had promised to do all it could to prevent Bethlehem residents from burning Israeli flags and firing in the air.

Gen. al-Hajj Isma'il told our correspondent that the residents of Gilo and the settlements near Bethlehem are in no danger. He noted that Israeli citizens will be able to visit Bethlehem freely in the future if they do not disturb the pace and obey the orders laid out in the interim agreement.

'Etzyon Bloc and Efrat residents said tonight that the transfer of Bethlehem to the Palestinians is a sad day. Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that the settlers still contend that the Bethlehem bypass road, which was inaugurated yesterday, is unsafe and is not secure.

Netanyahu: 'Retreat' Threatens Jerusalem

TA2112181295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu says the hasty retreat from Bethlehem jeopardizes the integrity of Jerusalem and helps smother it from the south, east, and north. At a Likud bureau meeting, Netanyahu said Jerusalem has reverted to what it was in the 1950's: a one-way road. His remarks were reported by our correspondent Yuval Yo'az.

Peres Security Tightened Following Threats

TA2212101195 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by On Levy and ITIM]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Continued warnings about possible attempts on Prime Minister Shim'on Peres's life have resulted in even stricter security measures to protect him, according to a senior General Security Service source.

"We're talking about a much greater number of warnings than those received prior to prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination," the source said. According to the source, radical right-wing activists plan to assassinate Peres over their frustration at the fact that Rabin's assassination did not stop the peace process. According to information received by the GSS some of the radical right-wing activists believe that eliminating Peres would not only stop the peace process with the Palestinians, but would halt the negotiations with Syria as well.

The Prime Minister's Office has tried to play down the information regarding the warnings, because it fears this might encourage right-wing activists to try to act on them.

According to GSS information, radical right-wing activists have recovered from the shock of the Rabin assassination and have resumed their activities.

GSS officials warn that another political assassination could occur here, carried out by a lone individual or a small group numbering two or three persons. These officials say the GSS recently stepped up its monitoring of these groups.

Senior GSS sources said that, as a result of the warnings, security around Peres will be tightened, including closing roads around his public appearances. "We know this inconveniences people, but we have no choice," a source said. "We can't ask the prime minister to stay holed up in his office, and we have to protect him." [passage omitted]

Sharon Supports Netanyahu for Prime Minister

TA2112184195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Knesset Member Ari'el Sharon has announced that he has withdrawn from the race for prime minister. Mr. Sharon said that in view of the state of the country and of the Likud, the party must not engage in internal struggles. He also believes that the Likud should make appropriate preparations for the possibility of early elections. Ari'el Sharon told our correspondent Yaron Deqel that the party should now rally around Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu.

More on Sharon Withdrawal From Race

TA2212121495 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Sarah Honig]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] MK [Knesset member] Ari'el Sharon announced yesterday that he is withdrawing his candidacy for prime minister and called on "all members of the national camp to unite at this dangerous time behind the leadership of Binyamin Netanyahu. Only such unity can guarantee the change in the government which this country so sorely and desperately needs."

Sharon said "this country finds itself in one of the most dangerous situations it has ever been in. We are facing a truly existential danger of the sort and extent that I am not sure the population fully grasps. This is hardly the time to split the national camp and waste energies on internecine battles. The Likud must be united at the crucial juncture and the entire national camp must be united as well."

Sharon's announcement took no one in the Likud by surprise. He ceased his acerbic onslaughts on Netanyahu more than a year ago, long before the Rabin assassination, which put the Likud on the defensive.

Some believe that Sharon and Netanyahu had come to a tacit understanding about the role to be accorded Sharon in any government Netanyahu might form, if he wins the elections.

But Sharon's withdrawal from the ring does not leave Netanyahu unchallenged on the political right. He is still dogged by Tzomet's Refa'el Eytan and by David Levi, each of whom might force a second round, if not hand victory to Labor's Shim'on Peres.

Netanyahu yesterday addressed a special session of his party's secretariat, called to mark the end of a membership drive which yielded more than 200,000 registered, dues-paying members. Netanyahu said this makes the Likud "the nation's single largest party and indicates the sort of infrastructure we have on the election campaign eve." He told the members that he believed "Peres has every intention of calling early elections. All indications point that way."

He also stated that he has information that the Syrian foreign minister's contention that Peres had undertaken to hand over the entire Golan speedily in a process that would last only a few months is correct. This has been denied by Peres. [passage omitted]

Former Tzomet MK Goldfarb Joins Labor

TA2212055695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Labor Party Central Committee has endorsed an earlier date for the party's Knesset primaries — 17 April. The central committee even authorized the party bureau to set a date at the end of March, if deemed necessary.

Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili announced last night that Knesset Member [MK] and Deputy Housing Minister Alex Goldfarb has decided to join the party.

Al-Tibi's Movement Names Party, Plans Convention

TA2112171195 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The preparatory committee of the movement headed by Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi has decided that the party it expects to form to run in the upcoming Knesset elections will be called the Arab Movement for Change [al-harakah al'arabiyah li al-taghyir].

Our correspondent Jawdat 'Awdah reports that the decision was made at a working meeting which ended late last night in the town of al-Tayyibah. The participants discussed the preparations for convening the party's general founding convention. It was decided to hold the convention after the upcoming blessed month of Ramadan.

King Husayn Discusses Domestic Issues, Iraq

JN2212063595 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1635 GMT 21 Dec 95

["Text" of speech and news conference by King Husayn at the Royal Palace in Amman on 21 December — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Husayn] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Warm greetings to all the brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, present here. We have been accustomed to holding such meetings and speaking frankly on our issues and problems. I hope this meeting will be fruitful. We have always given you the latest news, putting you in the picture as regards developments as we see them from our position in serving this country and our nation.

There are several topics I would like to touch on at this meeting. One of them is a general remark on our previous meetings, and the question that the brothers direct to us, or rather the excuse that they present; namely, that they are not informed of what is going on and, therefore, they write without knowing the truth and reality. The question is directed at my brothers who have met me here. Has any one of you written on any subject that we have discussed in our meetings? Were the results only a coverage of the event the next day? Was that all the coverage needed, and then you say you were not in the picture as regards the reality, details, and the issues which we are living?

In order for these meetings to have value and effect, you must discuss any points with us if you are not convinced, so that we can give you more. If you are convinced, then the results must be reflected in what you write and publish in the papers and the media.

Some may take issue with me because I spoke about our national media, responsible media, which you represent in this country. It may have been described as uncalled for. In fact, this is a result of the pain of the continuing experience of meeting with you, opening the doors for you, and the attempt to explain everything to you. The reaction has always been that we do not know what is going on. I do not know if such opportunities are given in any sisterly or nearby country, meeting as one family to discuss problems and issues without any restrictions—issues of concern to our sons in this country, the citizens.

After all these long years, forgive me if I blame all my brothers, and I mean many of the sons of Jordan in one field. Let us be frank in this and say that we appear to be suffering from an inferiority complex because of the feeling that the Jordanian cannot be equal to others, that Jordan is unable to say what it believes and to defend what it believes, and that Jordan should always be on the receiving end. Consequently, this reflects on the political movement in this country. This took place during the years that I spend with you in the fifties. We had an opportunity for a political life in a democratic atmosphere and for the sons of this country to meet and organize themselves around certain objectives and raise slogans in light of the fact that the country is the inheritor of the Great Arab Revolt. But what occurred was completely the opposite. Party movements spread in the Arab neighborhood, and it also became a phenomenon in Jordan. This also applies to any subject at any time.

The most important matter, brothers, in the coming stages is for us to be aware of these facts and to try to defend what we really believe to be in our nation's interest, just as it is in our interest in every area. We should not become in the course of time a repetition of an example we saw in a fraternal Arab country that has vanished in practice from the arena—a country that enjoyed freedom and freedom of the press. But these elements entered it and affected it, and it exists now, but is absent at the same time. I think I do not have to name the country, because you all know it. There are good things, inherited things—values, principles, morals. There is a past, a present, and we hope there will be a future. However, this is to a great extent up to you. You must cooperate to formulate this future and draw up its features, through responsibility, self-confidence, sincerity, truthfulness. The responsibility of the brothers in the media is greater than that of anyone else. They have the papers that the citizens read continuously. They are almost the people's bread and butter.

We have talked about self-flagellation. Yesterday, the newspaper published the following caricature: One says that a 10-dinar pay increase will take place at the end of the year. The other says: You mean an increase in taxes and prices. Which taxes and which prices? The prices are subject to supply and demand. Let us suppose that the state has managed to save money to improve the situation of its employees and workers in this country. Why then, is this cynicism of this process before it takes shape? I suggest that this be read by you. This is repeated every day in one way or another.

I can discuss the issue with you because you and I are responsible for this. I will leave it to you to tackle it in the future. For example, a few days ago al-'Aqabah, which is Jordan's seaport, was rocked by an earthquake. After I heard that there was no one there, that its inhabitants had fled, that tourism had been affected, and that it sustained grave damage, I went there and found that this was not true. I found some people in tents erected near their homes, which had not been hit.

I found criticism leveled against the state because it did not dispatch a mobile hospital. Why a hospital? No one was hurt. They said the state failed to give them more tents. We all believe in fate and divine decree. Things have not at all reached this point. Buildings are strong, and we have long been concentrating on the issue of construction, standards, and specifications, especially since this is an earthquake region. Praise be to God that there was only slight damage, and it is over. So, why this melancholy? I did not know the truth. However, you might say that this happened because it was said that pictures of earthquake-stricken areas outside al-'Aqabah were published. Praise be to God, there was nothing wrong in al-'Aqabah. Tourism was not affected in neighboring areas of the Gulf of Aqaba the same way al-'Aqabah was affected. Praise be to God, this stage is over. The atmosphere of doubt, suspicion, and lack of confidence in everything must be removed through the cooperation of all of us, God willing, so that we may put things in their proper place, and so that we may progress and attain our aims and goals, God willing. I did not mean anything regarding al-'Aqabah and its people, for we always discuss their problems and needs. It is known that we have paid attention to al- 'Aqabah more than any other city or place. We will continue to do so, because its people deserve this, and the city itself deserves all care, for it is Jordan's seaport and its link with the whole world.

Another thing, is the JORDAN TIMES. In fact, sir, [not further identified] I really appreciate your efforts and I feel that your reportage, editorials, and articles are above the standard, praise be to God, and God willing, things will continue to proceed in this direction. However, there is something strange here. For example, the news conference which was recently held in al-'Aqabah in the presence of the U.S. secretary of state, which was broadcast to the whole world. The translation here, or rather, the difference with the original version, reads: King Husayn also said he was open to the idea of a federation between Jordan and Iraq if that would help end the political and economic isolation of Iraq, but stressed that the decision was solely up to the Iraqi people. [preceding paragraph in English]

I did not say this at all. We must be accurate because this will confuse people, and raise issues which have nothing to do with reality. I do not know how this happened. Please, forgive me if I use this as an example. However, one can say that there are many examples in all our newspapers, but we should be accurate in the future.

God be praised, in my opinion our conditions are good and, God willing, will be better in the future. The peace dividends will, God willing, become a reality in the coming phases. The Amman economic summit was successful, God be praised. The results of this summit will take some time to appear, God willing.

There is talk about high cost of living and taxes. What is new on this subject? Maybe there is something to do with our attempts and the attempts of the government, which is from this country and for this country, to rectify certain matters. These attempts do not affect in any way whatsoever members of our Jordanian family, who cannot bear any higher costs in any form. These are directed at people who are more capable of bearing the brunt of this in an attempt to rectify matters in one form or another.

Regarding the reality which we have been living all our lives, in the last few years, we reached the situation where our production became equal to our expenditure and annual needs. We were in a most serious situation. We have suffered much, and we have concentrated on the Armed Forces, on absorbing the results of all the setbacks and the tragedies that have afflicted our Arab nation and consequently affected us. As of now we have no oil, no natural resources in the form that could allow us to deal with our problems. We are discovering more, and looking for whatever may be available. God be praised, the private sector and the state have made great strides. We have almost reached our goal, and perhaps we will overcome the difficult stage, where our annual expenditure becomes equal to our resources in a genuine way.

Therefore, the process is one of complementarity among everyone here. The citizen who pays taxes must know that this will be returned to him in terms of what he will need in the future. In recent years we have been moving abroad, establishing this country's relations with the world. These relations and the image of this country have contributed to our bearing the burden year after year, from the beginning.

Therefore, we are not talking about a rich country with massive resources, and the government is not shirking its duty, pressuring the people, or taking from them. We are talking about everyone's resolve that we will reach a situation where we will not need anyone's assistance. We are heading toward this phase as fast as possible within our resources and capacities. God willing, peace will give us the opportunity and allow us to work and construct so that we will provide security for everyone and provide them with a decent life to which they have a right.

What can we do about prices? It is a question of supply and demand. The state is not responsible for all of this. On the contrary, in the future—and I have stressed this point in discussion with my brothers—a time might come when this situation will be transformed from this condition into a different condition. A comprehensive study is needed of the state's property and its contributions to projects. Let it present this issue to the people, and let them bear the responsibility. Let us reduce the burdens of this government and the responsibility that any government could bear in the future. Let the private sector, which was absent in the past, requiring the government to participate in all projects, move forward. Circumstances have changed. Perhaps we will revise this with time, and then the government's apparatus will be reduced and its performance will improve, in terms of elements that will form it in the future. Let the people work. This is a challenge to all Jordanians in the coming phases.

He who believes that some people have the treasures of the world and are withholding them from others is mistaken. This is in no way reasonable or justified. On the contrary, we are trying to bring everything we can to this country in order to build it, to make the future different from the past, to attain the situation we have talked about several times and which we are repeating, to enjoy self-sufficiency and a situation in which we will need nobody, to be able to say our word, and to take positions on all circumstances out of our concern for our nation's interests and our interests.

Regarding the press and the media in general, we hope that the dialogue between us will continue to reach the best formula, which will satisfy everyone and which will not turn this issue into a controversial question at any stage. Instead, the bases and rules of action should be drawn up to satisfy everybody in the future and to enable everybody to shoulder his responsibility.

Once again, although nothing in this world frightens me, I am afraid of taking any measure or action that will not satisfy God and my conscience. But what actually frightens me with regard to the march in this country is that a situation I experienced in the fifties will be repeated in the future. I mentioned this during a similar meeting. At that time, I was young and I tried to open all doors and give everybody the opportunity to take part in a democratic life and development efforts. But things got out of control and democracy was struck with its own weapon. Consequently, we faced a setback for long years. We have now come back out of our concern about this march, human rights, and effective human participation, God willing, in drawing the features of the road.

I appeal to all my brothers and all citizens in this country to shoulder their responsibility along with us at this stage to oppose all the enemies of democracy, all the enemies of life, and all the enemies of man and to respect man and what he represents—man who is the basis of everything—as well as his future rights and participation in making his future and fate. Many are wagering that we are going to fail. This is not new to you. Everyone of you knows this and has heard much about it from near and far. We will not fail, God willing, but we have to be alert to avert a setback or the repetition of what had happened. We believe in democracy and it is our duty to enable our citizens to deal with and participate in their situation. The proof is that I began this march in the fifties and I have returned to it once again out of my belief in our citizen and his ability to deal with democracy and life by taking part in making his present and future, that he has a value that we should preserve, and that this country should be an example and a model for others. This is what he can offer to his brothers in this area and perhaps the world. Therefore, we have to do what we can to safeguard this march.

Press freedom does not mean stooping to so low a level not imagined before. It means that we must rise to the level of the great challenge that faces us as one family in this country, with various opinions and trends but within the country's framework, the National Charter, respect for the constitution, faith in the country and the determination to serve it until it realizes something. Thus we will be able to overcome this inferiority complex which is absolutely unjustified. God be praised, we are proud and we will never bow except for God Almighty.

If there is anybody who achieved more than we did let him appear so that we might measure his size. So, please, brothers be fair.

One of the recent topics is Iraq. I see that the brothers are rushing to take notes. The background is this: Our relations with Iraq are well-known from the Great Arab Revolt until 1958. In 1958 we were united in one state with Iraq. A coup took place and we chose to let the Iraqi brothers choose their own path. We wished them success. We overcame everything. The issue is not that of individuals. At stake was the interest of the nation and the homeland, the interest of peoples. Then we stood by Iraq and at various times it stood with us and by our side. When Iraq became the eastern gate of the Arab homeland, we stood by it with all our effort and resources and we bore the brunt because it was really guarding the eastern gate of this Arab homeland, standing in the face of danger. We continuously tried to promote this relationship on a responsible level, in a give-and-take manner, in consultations over our issues and problems, serving our nation's interest.

Then we moved to a phase where we had a cooperation council. Our hopes were large, full of confidence because of what we always heard from Iraq, that it does not allow itself to interfere in the affairs of others and does not allow Arab weapons to be used against the Arabs under any circumstances. We were surprised by the military action which resulted in the occupation of Kuwait. We were always against interference in the affairs of others and the use of weapons against others. We have witnessed a disaster for this nation, for Iraq, and for all of us. We tried to tackle the situation within the Arab framework and this was our duty. We did not succeed. What we had expected took place. Issues moved from our hands to the hands of others. We are still suffering the results and effects of what happened.

However, this does not mean that our concern for Iraq diminished in any way whatsoever. We continued to be concerned for the Iraqi people, the ancient country of Iraq, Mesopotamia with its great wealth, the human dimension, the cultural dimension, the pluralism which is a reality in Iraq—in terms of various civilizations, various origins, something which could have been an example for everyone, not only in the Arab world but all over the world. It is the country of wealth, material resources, brains, and capabilities. It was a buttress in terms of its status and importance in our great Arab homeland.

God knows that if you go back to my letters before the war, and to all my attempts until recently, you will find that I tried to give advice, inquire about the course to be followed, and attempted to enter into dialogue through which we could rescue Iraq from the abyss toward which it is heading—an abyss in the full sense of the word. But these efforts were to no avail. As a matter of fact, our concern and love for Iraq and the Iraqis has always been the motive behind all our movements, statements, and actions.

This country is sieged, its people are deprived of everything, and the situation there has reached a level in which people are selling parts of their bodies, so that they can provide food for their families. He who keeps silent about this, in my opinion, is an accomplice to the crime being committed against the Iraqi people. In the face of all this, we are not saying anything new or amazing that calls for surprise. All we say is that we call on all the Iraqis, all the representatives of the Iraqis, all the schools of thought, and all the trends, and tell them that it is high time they met and reached an understanding among themselves. They should begin by conveying a message to every Iraqi that the bloodbath that is said to be coming will not take place. None of us wishes that a bloodbath take place in Iraq because there has been enough bloodshed in Iraq. These representatives should look into possibilities of reassuring the Iraqis by conveying a message that assures the Iraqis that they mean to reconcile them, reach an understanding, and stand united in the face of any possibility for another crisis in Iraq, and eventually choose their own way.

If you want more details on this, perhaps we may not be wrong to say that, maybe at a later stage, the Iraqis may become free to choose their own lifestyle in the future and define it freely so that they may exercise their rights regarding the making of their future. The country's future is now mortgaged, God knows for how long. Iraq has to pay millions in compensations. Its oil is mortgaged. What kind of a situation is this for a country that is supposed to be emulated, a bastion of power, strength, steadfastness.

I have repeated what I have heard from Iraqis that a federation may be one of the ways or that the Iraqis may agree on this. However, this is a matter that concerns the Iraqis themselves when they meet and discuss the issue and find a means to rescue themselves and their country. In all cases, we support Iraq's unity and territorial integrity under all circumstances and conditions.

When we talk about federation, we talk about it in accordance with the German and the U.S. concepts, and in accordance with our understanding of many concepts in this world, in a situation which gives everyone his right within the framework of the one homeland. This could be administrative, but this is not my business. I should not decide this; it should be decided by the Iraqis themselves. However, we should encourage them to meet and to cooperate with each other to save their homeland and to save themselves. However, saying that this is a partitioning of Iraq, is really strange talk. This is because if we examine the real state of affairs, and the referendum which was recently held in Iraq, which denied many people in Iraq the right to express their opinion, taking into consideration that an opinion was truly expressed about the issue of leadership, the future, and the entire entity, we will find that partition lies here. Partition takes place through further bleeding, the blood which is being shed, deprivation, and suffering, and through Iraq's neighbors because each of its neighbors has a certain objective or interest. Our duty is to prevent the fragmentation of Iraq, to prevent the loss of Iraq, and to prevent the dismemberment of Iraq. We say it clearly and frankly. We do not conceal this. Neither do we work in darkness. Moreover, we said that the Iraqis have different ideas and opinions, and everyone has his own program. There might be a kind of connection among all these programs. So, we told them that if they want us to help them in any way, we are ready to help them agree on all that is in Iraq's interest.

Regarding the financial dimension, Jordanian companies and the financial situation were affected by this talk. The issue is not basically a financial issue. If we examine the financial dimension, we will find that Iraq owes Jordan approximately 1.2 billion [currency not further identified]. This 1.2 billion was paid by the Jordanian citizen, the taxpayer. This sum did not come from Iraq as a gift to reactivate the economic situation. This is paid by the Jordanian state to Jordanian companies to do their job. We should have a clear concept of what is going on. We will not hesitate in doing our utmost, on the humanitarian level, to alleviate the suffering of our people there. However, do not play down what this country has endured in this regard. This debt might be equivalent to a fifth or more of Jordan's foreign debt. We did not discuss the language of figures and arithmetics until this issue was raised in one way or another. We will continue our support by all means. However, I cannot see any ray of hope. This is because the leadership does not enter into a dialogue which would help us lift the blockade. Neither does this leadership give us a weapon which would help us save Iraq from this situation. The result, as I see it, is a catastrophe. It will also befall us and others if we do not prevent it in one way or another.

We have told our Iraqi brothers several times that the Security Council resolutions, for example, are not restricted to the weapons of mass destruction, unveiling them, and dealing with them, and that these resolutions have other dimensions, including human rights, the north, and the south. Therefore, this is an issue that needs a remedy. If we examine the issue of the weapons of mass destruction, we will face the issue of credibility. Regrettably, credibility is absent because of the many stories, stages, and discoveries of new things that were denied at different stages. This is the Iraqi issue, no more no less. I have said many times and told everybody that I have no personal ambition in Iraq. What we want is to play our utmost role so that Iraq can safely return to its nation and to us.

Regarding our internal affairs, we hope they will be in good shape in light of the budget, after which we will arrange for the future of this country. I believe that we have to focus on everything that will enable us to attain the requirements of peace on Jordan's land, to give our citizen every opportunity, to shorten the distance between us and anyone in the world in terms of knowledge, capability, and self-confidence, and to eliminate any fear. We are standing on solid ground. We are sticking to our doctrine, to our Arabism, and to our determination to maintain this country as an example for others.

We also do all we can to support the Palestinian brothers to attain their rights on their national soil and we call for peace to be comprehensive in this entire region so that the peoples of the region can enjoy the opportunities that have been denied in order to achieve everybody's wishes.

Regarding the human rights issue in Iraq or elsewhere, we can say it has become an international issue for which humanity has become responsible. We have many examples of this. Once again, we talk about Iraq and we say that we are trying to serve Iraq and unite the Iraqis. It is strange that these Iraqi meetings are taking place in all the Arab capitals but that nothing has been decided yet. However, a decision may come. There is leadership, resistance, and opposition. Nobody is talking about this at all. What is strange is that since the nineties there has been much uproar over our position. And when we talk about Iraq and its interests, we face another type of uproar. We have no ambitions, but if you examine the situation, you will see that others have ambitions.

I do not believe in idols. I have never — not even for one moment in my life — believed in idols. It is high time that we worked for the good of the people and for their future. The life of nations and peoples is never dependent on individuals or persons. I am not the kind of person who entertains personal ambitions and goals. My objective is to fulfill my duty toward others.

Another dimension and title is federation. Federation is a much advanced form compared to confederation. Let us take our own situation as an example. There was unity in the fifties as a result of the people's demand, then a disaster befell us and the Arab nation. Our Palestinian brothers sought to assume responsibility for themselves regarding their future, destiny, and cause. In this country, we insist that everybody shares one hand and one heart and that rights are guaranteed for all sons of this country, regardless of their origins. If we talk about the Arab nation and Arab unity, then we should be a model here in our life as a whole. Our Arab nation stood against the unity and called for ending it. The unity could have developed into a better form. At any rate, it was a unique and advanced step. Finally, came a demand for the acceptance of confederation, which is a much tamer form of federation. I marvel at this demand. If federation does not suit Iraq — and this may be true and this eventually is up to the Iraqis to decide — then why is it that confederation for us here is viewed as a nice and lovely thing that we should accept and pursue? This is in spite of all the ties that exist between us and our people and brothers in Palestine. Despite all of this, confederation and other options are still available. However, we will not take any position on any relationship or bond with our Palestinian people and brothers until after they regain, God willing, their rights on their territory and their freedom on their soil and are in a position whereby they can say their word and choose whatever they want. When this happens, the people here and there will choose any formula to govern their relationship, God willing. I wanted just to cite this as an example.

We do not endeavor to divide Iraq, but to bring it together and bring the Iraqis together before it is too late. God be praised, our conscience is clear. We do not impose individuals on Iraq. We do not impose anybody on Iraq. The Iraqis themselves are more capable of choosing the way to reach the condition whereby they will exercise their right of self-determination or choose their path, whether regarding the system of government or the future. God willing, this will be achieved shortly and all Iraqis, from all sects and from wherever they are, including those in power now in Iraq, will meet and reach an understanding so everyone can secure his rights and so Iraq can recuperate and become a safe and sound country for all of us without being a threat to the Arab entity or to itself or the region as a whole. This is our second subject. You may ask any question or make any comment, but I hope that my advice will not go unheeded. If you find what I say convincing, then that is good. And if you do not, then let us know why so we can have more debate and so that we can give you more details; but let us cooperate. The issue is greater than all of us. It is a question of the future and destiny of this country and nation, since we are the inheritors of a great Arab movement. Our only objective is to see our nation strong and dignified, God willing, and to play a positive role in this great homeland. God bless you all.

[Mustafa Abu-Libdah, editor in chief of AL-ASWAQ] Sir, you have spoken about an unjustified sense of an inferiority complex. If you allow me, yesterday we published in AL-ASWAQ a sort of overview of what has been achieved on the three peace tracks — the Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian tracks — in light of what was recently declared and confirmed by all parties. We raised this issue in terms of the timing and the fact that if any party lags behind, for example Lebanon, then it may pay an unnecessary price. We also spoke about substance and results and the depth of the tracks...

[Husayn, interrupting] You did very well. We always read AL-ASWAQ, along with the others papers. We wish you success in this new pattern.

[Abu-Libdah continues] It is now proposed that the Golan be turned into a free industrial or trade zone. At the Amman summit, it was agreed that the United States and Israel would fully support the implementation of the results to make optimal use of them. Do you think there is compatibility or conflict between the various tracks? We should be aware of this so we can guarantee that the results of the Amman summit will be implemented and that the tracks will proceed while everybody is certain that there is no room for one-upmanship?

[Husayn] Hopefully, there will be no room for one-upmanship by any party and things will proceed in the right direction and a just and comprehensive peace will be achieved. I do not see any threat in this. We had hoped that coordination would reach the required level whereby everybody would equally take part in decision-making. This would be a better situation. However, let me restate that we proceeded from the same point in Madrid and the tracks moved, starting with the Palestinian dimension. Then, we acted to resolve our own issues, and we regained our water and territory. Naturally, Egypt was the first to do this. Now, it is the turn of Syria and Lebanon. We hope negotiations will proceed. There will be no conflict. Again, regarding the domestic scene, I am against the dictatorship practiced by some who unjustifiably obstruct our march toward meeting the requirements of peace. Some people reject any stand that could lead us to accelerate this process and gather the fruit of peace quickly. Those people impose restrictions on others regarding the required action in different sectors. How can those people claim that peace has no benefits while they are obstructing the process and are taking a negative stand? Consequently, we might miss the chance and time will run out without achieving what we agreed upon at the Amman summit or elsewhere if this view prevails. Therefore, we focus on professions and on the need to upgrade professions and performance to the best of our ability and within our resources. This is because the political dimension is the responsibility of the parliament and the representatives of this people who are elected to handle these dimensions, and not others. I do not think there will be any negative aspects. I hope that peace will include the entire region. There are other dimensions that could have many positive aspects in the future for Jordan and its march.

[AL-DUSTUR Chief Editor Nabil al-Sharif] Thank you, Sir, for this meeting which is unfamiliar in this part of the world. Regarding melancholy, Sir, it really exists. However, sometimes it is not out of bad intention. It might result from lack of information. I admit that sometimes we find difficulty in obtaining information, not from the head of the echelon or from the government, but on the level of departments, we are still not used to openness in terms of having access to information. This might be our responsibility also as pressmen. We should help people realize that positive and good information serves citizens and that it is difficult to deal with rumors in the absence of information.

The other thing which produces melancholy, or bad performance by the press, is lack of training. Regrettably, we are incapable in terms of training and we need to promote this. Your Majesty called many times for developing this profession. The solution to this or the way out from this could be establishing a press training center.

[Husayn] We will support you with all our potential if you agree on this.

[Al-Sharif] There are violations in the press. I would like to say that such violations harm us, as journalists, before they harm any other party. We are pained and we feel sorrow when we see these violations. I believe that it is time we, as journalists, moved to end this situation and to save the press from what it is suffering.

We must also concentrate on the fact that responsibility is the other side of freedom. Some thinkers say that anything added to freedom will annul it. We do not believe in this. We believe that our target should be the responsible freedom. Thank you, Sir.

[Husayn] Yes, please.

[Salamah al-'Ukur] [Words indistinct] the information on the developments and events are available. His Majesty King Husayn always speaks to the media and pressmen on any event. His Royal Highness Prince Hasan also gives lengthy statements on current events. They also exploit any occasion to speak about topical affairs and the developments in the region, in particular. His excellency the prime minister also addresses the House of Representatives and the Senate on the developments and events and Jordan's stand vis-a-vis them.

However, I believe that some parties stand behind this large-scale campaign or onslaught against this country. I believe there is a sort of injustice. There is an onslaught on all levels beginning with government departments and ending with the head of state. This campaign is unjustified and not right. We should correctly identify these matters to deter any possible dangers so that our people will always be alert and vigilant to these unjustified campaigns against this country and its leadership. Thank you.

[Husayn] Thank you.

[Mu'nis al-Razzaz] In fact, I began to worry because on many occasions his majesty the king expressed the feeling that the people in Jordan do not really value democratization. The king, who rejected the erection of a statue for him, is the only Arab leader who studied in Europe and lived in an enlightened atmosphere. We lived with other Arab experiments and there were rivers of blood. Therefore, I hope that his majesty the king will realize that we appreciate the standard of life we have been living in compared with the experiments in which we lived and for which we paid with our blood and life. I would like his majesty the king to allow me to say this: Do not let melancholy come from you. We do not have melancholy.

[Husayn] I also do not have this.

Bin-Shakir on Kuwait, Yemen-Eritrea Dispute, Iraq

JN2112155295 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 21 Dec 95 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir has stated that the recent dispute within the Gulf family seen in the Muscat summit was over a minor issue, and that it can be coped with easily and fraternally.

The prime minister made these remarks in a statement to colleague Ahmad 'Ali, responsible editor-in-chief of the Qatari newspaper AL-WATAN. The Qatari newspaper, in cooperation with AL-DUSTUR, is publishing this statement today.

When questioned about how he sees the future of inter-Gulf ties after what happened at the final session of the recent Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] summit, the prime minister said that it was Qatar's turn to name a new GCC secretary general. Nonetheless, what has happened can be contained quickly, because the things GCC members have in common are largely greater than the things that can drive them apart. It is a transient crisis that will be resolved within the Gulf family without any further repercussions, Bin-Shakir noted.

Commenting on the fighting between Yemen and Eritrea, the prime minister said: Jordan has not thus far taken an official stand on this issue. Nonetheless, it goes without saying that Jordan supports fraternal Yemen. The party that started the aggression is responsible for the consequences.

This was an clear reference to the Eritreans, whose troops have recently invaded the two disputed islands of al-Hanish al-Kabir and al-Hanish al-Saghir. He stated that Yemen is capable of defending its territory. He added that His Majesty King Husayn telephoned President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to reassure himself about the situation.

Responding to a question on whether the resignation of the Kuwaiti foreign minister was connected in any way to the issue of Kuwaiti-Jordanian ties, al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir said that the reports circulated on the issue confirmed this. Nonetheless, he chose not to give the issue much thought, he said, because he believes that the resignation is a domestic Kuwaiti affair which Jordan cannot be directly concerned about.

The prime minister added that Jordan hopes for normal ties with all parties. Nonetheless, it understands Kuwait's sensitivity and deems it a special case. The ties with Kuwait will inevitably return to normal, one month or one year from now. We are not pressing for an excessive rush to normalize ties, he argued.

Bin-Shakir went on to say: Jordan has never severed its ties with Kuwait, even at the height of the Gulf crisis. As a matter of fact, Jordan stepped up security around the Kuwaiti Embassy to protect it from hardliners at the time.

With regard to ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the prime minister expressed optimism, saying there are serious efforts to return them to normal.

The prime minister also spoke on the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations, saying: Jordan strongly believes that there will be no true peace in the region unless the peace deals attained are just and comprehensive. He hoped that this basic point will be taken into account in the upcoming negotiations between the Syrians and Israelis.

As for Iraq, al-Sharif Zayd said that King Husayn visited Iraq three times in an attempt to avert inter-Arab fighting. He added: These visits were interpreted as a manifestation of support for the Iraqi regime. Well, we acknowledge the fact that Jordan has not made a media effort to explain its real stand, which was misinterpreted. What is important is that the heart of each and every Arab now goes out to Iraq. This holds true for Qatar and other Arab states that are sympathetic with the ordeal of the Iraqi people. Efforts are under way to discuss solutions that would end the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The prime minister explained that His Majesty King Husayn's proposal regarding the establishment of a federation in Iraq to resolve the intractable Iraqi crisis reflects Jordan's thinking regarding one of the possible solutions to save Iraq.

The prime minister also touched on the position of Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement], which is opposed to participation in the upcoming Palestinian elections, describing it as regrettable. He added that he prefers to see the whole Palestinian people take part in the elections, given the fact that the Palestinians are faced with a major domestic reconstruction endeavor. Consequently, it is in everyone's interest to take part in this endeavor.

With regard to reports on a Jordanian cabinet reshuffle, the prime minister said these reports are only circulated in closed chambers. Nothing official has been done in this regard. He denied making any efforts toward that end.

Radio Calls For Termination of 'Occupation'

JN2112175995 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: Negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track are to resume near the U.S. capital, Washington, on 27 December. This announcement has been the source of guarded optimism for those circles that look forward to bringing about a just and comprehensive Middle East peace based on the principle of land for peace, the U.S. initiative, and the UN Security Council's resolutions urging the Israeli occupation to withdraw from the occupied Golan to beyond the 4 June 1967 lines and from southern Lebanon in accordance with Resolution 425 without leaving any trace of occupation on these territories, whether a settlement, an observation post, or an early-warning ground station.

These optimistic but guarded expectations about the peace process have emerged from the following factors: First, Syria has sought a just peace as a strategic option because of its principled eagerness to safeguard the national and pan-Arab right to every inch of land. Consequently, Syria has offered every facility to launch the peace process and save it from the crises created since the Madrid conference by the previous hardline Israeli governments.

The second factor that has created an atmosphere of optimism about the future of the peace process is the active, serious U.S. move to promote the peace process. In addition, we have the positive new ideas of the Israeli prime minister and other Israeli officials. These Israeli statements assert that stability in the Middle East will only take place through an agreement between Israel and Syria. An Israeli minister in the Peres government has asserted that it is difficult to achieve peace with Syria without a total Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.

Optimism about the future of the peace process is, however, mixed with caution and even with concern in view of the positions of the Israeli right wing, which is still captive to its intransigence and which has wasted four years of the age of the peace process. This Israeli right wing is still sticking to its expansionist trend and its alleged security considerations, although true security and safety can only be achieved through a just peace in which all parties stand on equal footing, and in which there is no victor or vanquished.

While we seek a just peace as a guarantee to the security and safety of all parties, we stress the fact stated in the U.S. initiative itself, which asserts that territory as a strategic option has become unimportant because of the advanced technology in the field of weapons. Yosi Sarid, Israeli Minister of Environmental Protection, said the day before yesterday that total peace with Syria in strategic terms is more important that the Golan.

The strangest element in the position of the Israeli right wing is that it ignores its own experience in this regard. The Likud government, led by Menachem Begin, launched major aggressive wars against Lebanon in 1978 and 1982, but did not achieve the security the Israeli right wing uses as a pretext—even though one of these two aggressive wars was codenamed Peace for Galilee. Moreover, a third of a million Israelis staged a large demonstration in 1983 during the reign of the right-wing Likud. The demonstrators demanded Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. The victory of the Labor Party in the recent Israeli Knesset elections was due to a peace promise made by the Israeli Labor Party to the Israeli society in the face of the right wing's intransigence and expansionism that were wrapped in security pretexts.

The guarded optimism about the future of the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track prompts us to say that a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace can be achieved quickly only if the new Israeli ideas turn into a new Israeli position in line with the resolutions of the international legitimacy. Thus, the gap that keeps Israel away from the Syrian position will be filled. In other words, ideas should be turned into quick achievements based on termination of the occupation in return for security and safety. The required quick achievement is total withdrawal for total peace.

Resumption of Peace Talks With Israel Viewed

JN2212110395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 22 Dec

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH speaks about the resumption of peace talks between Syria and Israel near Washington on 27 December. It notes that the realization of peace in the region is one of the major goals Syria seeks to achieve. It adds: Realizing peace cannot be done through only one party, that is, through Syria alone. Realizing the aspired peace relies on Israel's position and on the manner in which it will deal with the upcoming peace talks which we hope — as the whole world certainly does — will achieve the projected progress to create a proper groundwork for a genuine peace.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: In order for this projected progress to be accomplished, the Israeli officials, who speak nowadays about peace and its requirements, should translate their statements on the ground, because if they do so the peace process will undoubtedly move forward in the right direction.

AL-BA'TH points out: Syria — as the U.S. sponsor in particular acknowledged — works absolutely seriously to ensure the success of the peace process. Syria has done much to realize this noble objective. All parties, including Israel's leaders, noted that without Syria, there can be no genuine peace in the region.

The newspaper states: Based on this and on the current situation and the future of the peace process, Israel is supposed to go to the peace talks after making the indispensable decision to render the peace process a success and to help it attain its objectives and aims, that is, Israel should confirm its commitment to the resolutions of international legitimacy and implementation of the land-for-peace principle.

In one of its commentaries today, AL-THAWRAH says: The resumption of peace talks between Syria and Israeli on the level of ambassadors provides a new real and significant opportunity along the road toward a just and comprehensive peace sought by the region. This opportunity should be seized well by the Israeli side, which has always been the direct reason for the stumbling, standstill, and lack of progress of any sort on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

The paper adds: True, positive developments — if we may say that — have taken place and the ideas the U.S. secretary of state has passed on from the Israeli side reflected a change in the position and future approach to the question of peace. However, this is not enough and will remain mere verbal proposals and promises that require commitment and action. Without such commitment, full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, and return to 4 June 1967 lines, peace cannot be realized.

The paper asserts: Syria is for peace within the concept of comprehensiveness and justice — peace that is based on the terms of reference of the Madrid conference, international legitimacy, and the spirit of the U.S. initiative. Such peace should return the land and rights in the Golan and southern Lebanon in full. We do not accept negotiations for the sake of negotiations. We accept nothing less than full right.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH maintains: It is a just and comprehensive peace that incorporates all elements and meets all its requirements that would realize equitable [mutakafi'] security for all in the region. It is time that israel should understand that occupation and aggression will never bring security or peace for it.

AL-THAWRAH continues: The Israeli statements on peace — where a change in the Israeli position can be sensed — will not, in fact, change the nature of the anti-peace Israeli position, unless Israel couples declared statements with declared and outright actions expressing an Israeli commitment to the foundations of peace. These foundations are represented in full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon and institution of equitable and balanced [mutakafi'ah wa mutawazinah] peace arrangements on both sides of the borders in a manner that would realize the justice of peace.

AL-THAWRAH concludes its commentary by saying: Damascus has always been very clear and specific in its position on peace. It has also been the most committed party to the foundations of peace. It explicitly stated that peace is its strategic option. To be clearer and more specific, it advocated full peace in return for full withdrawal. It announced to the whole world with the same clarity, frankness, and specificity its principles and well known constants on peace — constants that safeguard the rights and dignity of the Arabs and accomplish a just and comprehensive peace based on resolutions of international legitimacy and full Israeli withdrawal to 4 June 1967 lines and from southern Lebanon.

Afghanistan

Iran's Borujerdi Arrives in Kabul for Talks

To Discuss Dostam Meeting

*LD2112141795 Tehran IRNA in English
1401 GMT 21 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 21, IRNA — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi arrived here Thursday heading a delegation and was welcomed by a number of Afghan officials. [Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto at 1530 GMT on 21 December reports: "At the airport, Mr. Borujerdi and his accompanying delegation were welcomed by esteemed Aziz Morad, head of the presidential press office; the Kabul mayor; esteemed Akbari, member of the Central Council of Wahdat-e Eslami (Islamic Unity Party); head of protocol of the Foreign Ministry; and a number of officials from this ministry."]

Borujerdi is to hold talks with a number of senior Afghan officials, including Afghan President Borhannodin Rabbani, commander-in-chief of government forces Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, official in charge of Afghan Foreign Ministry Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i, leaders of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] and certain other Afghan officials.

In his meeting with Rabbani, Borujerdi is expected to brief the former on the outcome of his talks with leader of National Islamic Front in northern Afghanistan General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam and Wahdat leader 'Abdolkarim Khalili on ways of finding a political solution to the Afghanistan crisis.

Borujerdi arrived in Mazar-e Sharif, capital of Balkh province, on Sunday and held talks with Dostam.

In his visit to Bamian, Borujerdi held talks with Khalili and certain other Wahdat officials on putting an end to the infighting in Afghanistan.

The goal behind Borujerdi's visit to Afghanistan, is to help find a political solution to the crisis in Afghanistan, bring positions of Afghan groups closer to one another and encourage them to sit at the negotiating table.

Consults With Rabbani

LD2112194295 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, met this afternoon esteemed 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister for Asia and Pacific of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The esteemed president first recalled with appreciation the goodwill efforts and peaceseeking endeavors by the Islamic Republic of Iran in regard to Afghanistan's issues and assessed the efforts made by the esteemed deputy foreign minister of Iran concerning Afghanistan's issues as valuable and beneficial.

At this meeting, which took place in a friendly atmosphere, talks were held on the current regional issues, good and friendly relations between the neighboring countries.

Meets With Lafra'i

*LD2112152795 Tehran IRNA in English
1507 GMT 21 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 21, IRNA — The visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi and acting Afghan Foreign Minister Najibollah Lafra'i here Thursday held talks on the latest developments in Afghanistan and Tehran-Kabul ties. Lafra'i said that Kabul government is ready to work to materialize a political solution for the Afghan crisis in order to put an end to war and bloodshed in the country. He added that Afghan problems and crisis have no military solution stressing that dialogue and political means offer the key to the problems of the war-torn country. Lafra'i thanked Iran's efforts to halt clashes and war in Afghanistan and announced Afghan government's readiness for overall expansion of bilateral ties.

Borujerdi expressed regret over continuation of clashes in Afghanistan and said that the Islamic Republic of Iran will definitely continue its efforts to help end the Afghan crisis and find a political solution. He added that as an Islamic and humanitarian duty Tehran will continue rendering humanitarian assistance to the Muslim people of Afghanistan.

Meets Islamic Wahdat Party Leader

*LD2212071295 Tehran IRNA in English
0633 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 22, IRNA — Head of the Central Council of the Islamic Wahdat (unity) Party of Afghanistan Hojat ol-Eslam Mohammad Akbari told Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ala'ddin Borujerdi here Thursday that his party is against all sorts of confrontation in Afghanistan. He said it is the duty of all political parties and groups to bring peace to his country.

The Afghan party official also appreciated the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran for ending armed clashes in Afghanistan.

Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister for Asia-Pacific affairs, said Iran would continue her efforts for ending the civil war in Afghanistan.

He also expressed hope that Shia Muslims, through unity of expression, would maintain a strong presence in various scenes of Afghanistan alongside their Sunni brethren.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry official arrived in Kabul for a one- day visit Thursday morning.

Talks With Mas'ud

LD2212113995 Tehran IRNA in English
1033 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 22, IRNA — Commander of Afghan armed forces Ahmad Shah Mas'ud here on Thursday thanked Iran's humanitarian efforts for restoration of peace in Afghanistan.

Mas'ud met with the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia- Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi prior to the conclusion of the Iranian official's four-day visit to Afghanistan. Mas'ud said that Iran's relentless measures for cessation of hostilities in Afghanistan would leave positive impacts on Afghan political circles and people, something which would be recorded in Afghanistan's history. He announced readiness to have cooperation with Iran in its mediation efforts to achieve a decisive result. He said what they were doing in Kabul was defence against attacks by Taleban group which has so far claimed lives of a large number of defenseless people.

Referring to his recent visits with leaders of belligerent parties in Afghanistan, Borujerdi said views of the factions had become closer to each other than in the past. He expressed hope that the clashing sides would reach a principled understanding. He stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran viewed negotiations as the sole factor to reach understanding to solve crisis in Afghanistan, adding that the outcome would be cessation of hostilities and establishment of permanent peace.

Holds News Conference

LD2212095895 Tehran IRNA in English
0906 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 22, IRNA — The visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi met and conferred with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and head of Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement] Party Central Council and Deputy Premier Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad 'Ali Javed here on Thursday.

Borujerdi briefed Rabbani at the meeting on the outcome of his recent visit to Pakistan, Mazar-e Sharif and Bamian and said the Islamic Republic of Iran is hopeful its ceaseless efforts will lead to an end to the war and restoration of peace in Afghanistan. He said that Afghanistan had suffered extensive loss of capital and facilities as a result of war, adding that continuation of clashes will place many problems in the way of reconstruction effort in the country. Borujerdi assured that the Islamic Republic of Iran would continue its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan besides making political efforts for solving current crisis there.

Rabbani for his part thanked Iran's continued efforts for the cessation of war and fratricide and said no doubt such attempts will entail valuable outcomes for the finalization of crisis. He added that the Afghan government supported measures Iran has so far taken and was ready to fully cooperate in this regard. He said the government was ready to take fundamental steps for bringing about peace and mutual understanding among all groups, hoping that all belligerent parties would make peace-seeking efforts to this end.

In another meeting, Javed and Borujerdi discussed latest political developments, ways of establishing peace and permanent tranquility and Tehran-Kabul ties. Javed, also Afghan head of Tehran-Kabul joint economic commission, appreciated Iran's peace seeking efforts and considered political means as the sole way of ending crisis and clashes in Afghanistan. He said that Harakat-e Eslami party, as an ally to Rabbani's administration, backed such measures. He added that observation of the rights of all Afghan tribes and groups was a prerequisite for ending crisis and blood shed in Afghanistan, adding that the government attached special importance to such a point.

Borujerdi in return outlined Tehran's viewpoints and efforts for solving crisis in Afghanistan and underscored continuation of such efforts. He added that the Shia community along with other religions and organizations should have active presence on the scene and strive for the cessation of war and holding negotiations for restoration of peace.

Before leaving for Tehran on Thursday, Borujerdi called the outcome of his visit and talks in Afghanistan as "satisfactory and optimistic." Speaking at a press conference at the conclusion of his four-day official visit, Borujerdi said since he was hopeful for the settlement of the crisis and given the tendency of the belligerent groups for halting the war in futute, he would continue his efforts to bring the stands of the warring parties closer and establish understanding among them. He added that leaders of all clashing groups and parties in Afghanistan were dissatisfied with the continuation of war and stressed on the establishment of peace and security in the country. He added that Iranian officials would also continue their efforts for a fundamental and sustainable solution.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Borujerdi referred to war as the worst alternative and said to end the current crisis, in which people have suffered the most, understanding should be used instead of weapons.

Borujerdi said that Afghanistan neighbors, including Iran, were dissatisfied and concerned with the status quo, adding that if principled decisions were made for holding negotiations, lasting peace and security could be attained. Referring to his recent visit to Islamabad, Borujerdi said Iran had invited Pakistan to launch joint efforts for putting an end to the deplorable situation in Afghanistan. Also referring to Tehran-Islamabad "traditional and very good" ties, Borujerdi said that while striving for an end to the war in Afghanistan, Iran tried to return ties between Islamabad and Kabul to a "favorable and brotherly" level.

As for his talks with Taleban group, Borujerdi said representatives of Iran in Herat, Peshawar, Islamabad and other places were busy holding talks with officials of the group, trying to encourage them to observe self-restraint in the continuation of war and adopt a peaceful solution. The Iranian official said if there was no improvement in relations among belligerent parties, escalation of clashes would be something natural.

Moreover, he said that if the UN special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri succeeded in adopting a fundamental and serious measure for the restoration of peace in Afghanistan, Iran would welcome it. He added that Mestiri had in a series of contacts expressed satisfaction with Iran's efforts and stands towards Afghanistan. He expressed hope that peace and calm would return to Afghanistan as soon as possible and that the ground would be paved for reconstruction of the ruins caused by war.

Borujerdi left for home on Thursday after meeting with Commander- in-Chief of Afghan government Ahmad Shah Mas'ud at Bagram airbase, 60 km north of Kabul.

Government Accuses Taleban of Forced Conscription

*LD2112123295 Tehran IRNA in English
1047 GMT 21 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 21, IRNA — The Afghan government has accused the Taleban group of forcing the youth in the southwestern areas to fight against government troops. The state owned Bakhtar news agency, quoting an Afghan offical, said on Wednesday night that there are enough evidence proving that the Taleban forces after capturing Herat and Nimroz provinces, in the southwest, have forced the youth to fight against the state troops in the Lowgar and Maydan Shahr frontlines.

According to the source, creation of an atmosphere of terror by the Taleban group is the main reason behind the growing defection of the youth from Herat Province to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Earlier reports indicated that Afghan youth in areas under the control of the Taleban were dispatched to the warfronts by force.

The group is also accused of preventing Afghan women from social activities and forcing the opponents such as Shia Muslims to evacuate their settlements. Herat and Nimroz provinces came under control of the Taleban forces some four months ago.

Military Attacks on Kabul City Area Continue

Rockets Hit Center

LD2112152195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Today around noon seven Katyusha-type missiles and heavy weapon shells landed on the central areas of Kabul city. According to a report by the correspondent of the Central News Unit in Kabul, two rockets landed on a school located in Ariana Square, but did not cause any loss. A heavy artillery shell exploded on a height inside the city which did not cause any loss of life or material.

A source from Afghanistan's Defense Ministry accused the Taleban group of firing rockets on Kabul city.

Five Citizens Injured

*LD2112165195 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network
in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul city's residential areas were hit again today by missiles fired by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban.

The Bakhtar agency reports that Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired nine rockets at residential areas of Kabul, as a result of which five citizens were injured. Four houses sustained some damage as a result of the landing of rockets.

Taleban Positions Bombed

LD2112172695 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] As a result of air raids by the Islamic army, nine of Benazir Bhutto's Taleban were killed and three of their tanks were destroyed in the south of Kabul.

Reports received by BAKHTAR say that as result of this bombardment of Ta'lemi Markaz [training center] in Charasyab [20 km south of Kabul city], several strong positions together with one BM-21 set of the Taleban group were destroyed.

India

Russian-Made Plane Forced To Land in Bombay

BK2212105595 Hong Kong AFP in English 1029 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bombay, Dec 22 (AFP) — A Russian-made plane heading for Karachi was forced to land at the airport in this western Indian city on Friday and the six members of its crew taken into custody, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

The news agency quoted Gopinath Munde, deputy chief minister of Maharashtra state, of which Bombay is the capital, as saying that the plane was flying from Thailand to Karachi when it was directed to land by air traffic controllers.

The six members of the An-26 transport plane had been taken into custody and the plane impounded, he said.

Munde said the plane was spotted in the air space over Bombay shortly after midnight and directed to land.

PTI quoted unidentified official sources as saying that the Indian air force had been called in to assist with the investigation.

Further details were not immediately available.

Suspected of Arms Drop

BK2212143595 Hong Kong AFP in English 1412 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BOMBAY, Dec 22 (AFP) — A Russian-made plane headed for Karachi was forced to land here Friday and police said the aircraft was suspected of involvement in a mysterious arms- drop over eastern India five days ago.

The six crew members aboard the AN-26 transport plane were detained after air traffic controllers in this western Indian city ordered the aircraft to land around 1:30 a.m. (2000 GMT Thursday), police said.

Five of them were carrying Latvian passports while the fifth was described by police as a former British military officer.

In a statement, the police said the plane was suspected to have dropped a consignment of arms over the eastern Indian state of West Bengal on Sunday.

Police in the West Bengal district of Puruliya have found crates containing nearly 150 AK-47 and AK-56 assault rifles, rocket launchers, anti-tank grenades, hand grenades and thousands of rounds of ammunition since Sunday.

The weapons worth an estimated four million dollars were attached to at least four parachutes dropped by an unidentified low-flying plane on Sunday night, according to officials and villagers living in the remote area.

The police statement said the aircraft was "suspected to be involved in the airdropping of the arms" and added that "police were alerted about the landing of this aircraft by central intelligence agencies."

Police Commissioner Ramdeo Tyagi told a news conference that the crew was being interrogated by the police, army, air force and intelligence agencies.

He identified them as Captain A. Klishn and crew members O. Gaidash, I. Moskuitan, I. Timmerman and I. Antimenko — all holders of Latvian passports — and Peter K. Bleach, a British national.

The police commissioner described Bleach as a "former British defence services officer" who was now working as a salesman of aircraft and spare parts.

Tyagi said a search of the plane, which has been impounded and put under guard, did not yield anything incriminating.

The Latvians had been based in Karachi for the past two months but their passports did not have departure stamps from the Pakistani city's airport, he said.

Tyagi said the aircraft left Karachi on Sunday and landed in the northern Indian town of Varanasi. It flew to the West Bengal capital Calcutta the same day and on to Phuket in Thailand the next day.

It reportedly left Thailand on Thursday and landed in the southern Indian city of Madras for refuelling. The plane was heading for Karachi when it was ordered to land here, he said.

Tyagi said preliminary questioning of the crew revealed they were involved in "something suspicious."

"We are sure they were involved in the air-drop of arms on Sunday over West Bengal as they were shuttling between Varanasi and Calcutta on that day," he said.

"There is something very fishy about this. They seem to be part of a larger conspiracy," he said, declining to give further details.

A number of theories have been advanced to explain the mystery air-drop of arms on Sunday in West Bengal, some 200 kilometres (125 miles) west of India's border with Bangladesh.

According to newspapers, one of the boxes of arms bore a label addressed to "The Commandant, Rajendrapur Cantonment, Bangladesh," sparking speculation they were intended for the Bangladesh military.

THE PIONEER said there were suspicions the aircraft may have strayed into Indian airspace from Bangladesh.

Other newspapers said the beneficiaries may have been tribal guerrillas in the Indian state of Bihar state, which borders West Bengal, and that the arms were part of a destablization plot by India's arch rival Pakistan.

U.S. Said To Use Nuclear Test To Push Signing

BK2212110195 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 21 Dec 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Testing Time for India?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The inspired "leaks" in THE WASHINGTON POST and THE NEW YORK TIMES suggesting sinister preparations in Pokaran to test a nuclear device has brought to the fore what sections of the media is suggesting a siege mentality on the nuclear issue. The timing of the leak, just as foreign ministers from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation were gathering for the tenth year commemorative session, was clearly designed to embarrass and politically vilify India in the international stage. Another fact that cannot be ignored is that the well-timed stories have momentarily diverted attention from the misconceived American plan to arm Pakistan—a known nuclear rogue country specialising in exporting terrorism-and fomenting trouble over a wide swathe of the region—to the teeth through the specious and deplorable Hank Brown Amendment. The American intention is to generate movement on the nuclear disarmament question and hustle India into signing the dotted line on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT], thereby foreclosing India's nuclear option while at the same time perpetuating the nuclear apartheid regime.

So far as India is concerned, the stance has been as forthright as it has been consistent: The aim should be towards global nuclear disarmament without the notable exceptions—America, Russia, China, France and the United Kingdom—that are now being sought to be made. India has also said that the disarmament should be a verifiable process and done within a reasonable period of time In principle this is fine, but in practice, through consistent diplomatic bullying, the real issues are being steadily, and dangerously, obfuscated. The attempt, by raising a dubious nuclear bogey, is to erode the point that India is making while calling for universal nuclear disarmament. More fundamentally, the Americans hope to end India's nuclear ambivalence once and for all, in the run up to the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which President Bill Clinton hopes to have in the bag by the end of next year. The broad American strategy is to isolate pockets of resistance on the nuclear question, which they consider inimical to their interests,- and steadily chip away, in much the same manner through which the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was arrived at some months ago. India should not allow this to be repeated at the CTBT proceedings which begin in Geneva next month. There is a genuine pressure now to end the nuclear ambivalence, and it would work in India's long- term interests to resolve the issue after logically weighing all possible consequences, especially political, without exactly being stampeded into taking a decision.

Article Calls For Second Nuclear Test

BK2212103395 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 21 Dec 95 p 13

[Article by Pravin Sawhney]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London: We, the people of India, have to ask ourselves why we are not taken seriously at international gatherings. This is because we flog archaic concepts of Cold War, are quick to take a high moral stand on trans-national issues like disarmament terrorism, fundamentalism, diaspora without making our intention clear, attempt to sell economic liberalisation without a review of relations between federal and state governments and a genuine move towards privatisation and fail to understand that military power in the age of regional security concerns and increasing economic ties is restricted by mutual understanding.

We pontificate instead of taking a stand, and are hypocritic and secretive where we should be transparent and firm. Remember the secrecy around the London talks in 1994 for bilateral discussions with Washington on nuclear disarmament? The unrelenting pressure by the United States on our indigenous missile programme and a constant denial of it by the government? If we had been truthful to ourselves, the scientists would be working on the range of cruise missiles and advanced vessel technology for nuclear powered submarine, instead of talks about a need to commence productisation of Prithvi missiles. If the United States went far on the Kashmir question we are blamed for kowtowing to any official descending on us from Washington.

As the founding member of non-alignment, we are holding out to an outdated concept with a new definition. "Non-alignment is an alternate point of view, that does not accept unquestioningly either the Western or the Communist dogmas," said foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee addressing the Royal Institute of International Affairs here on November 22, adding, "Non-alignment stays alive for much the same reason that NATO does, because its members believe that it has given them collective security."

Now Indonesia, another founding member of the non-alignment does not think so after it recently signed a bilateral security pact with Australia, and is a member of ASEAN and ASEAN Regional Forum. out foreign office is surprised when India is excluded from the first summit of European and Asian leadership scheduled in Bangkok for I March 1996. Countries from Asia include ASEAN nations, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as China Japan and South Korea. Europe will be represented by 15 members of the European Union. "How could you hold an Asian summit without taking India into it, a country with the second largest population in the world?" Mr Pranab Mukherjee asked. Much in the same way as India is denied entry into ASEAN, and is unlikely to make it as a permanent member of the Security Council. Population cannot be the criteria of an entry into any grouping — economic strength, military power and definitive stands are.

The foreign minister is quick to criticise powerful economic blocks like the EU, NAFTA and Apec [Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation] as being insular and protectionist. He favours continental experiments like the Organisation for Security and Co- operation in Europe as a better practice to follow as no continental nation is discriminated. The latter is not happening in Asia.

A European experiment like OSCE cannot take place in Asia because external powers have an economic and security role in the Pacific Asia region. There is uncertainty in the future role of the United States Russia, China and Japan in the region, the tension in the Korean peninsula, future of relations between China and Taiwan and a peaceful resolution of disputes in South China sea. The joker in the pack is China, a land of contradictions and military power. The small nations of south-east Asia with booming economies are getting closer despite bilateral differences in various regional grouping. The latest such understanding is the signing of the south-east Asia nuclear free zone despite objections from Washington and Beijing.

India does not figure in any regional grouping for a simple reason that it has not defined its geopolitical identity in a dew world dispensation. It has not defined its areas of influence and interest. This is despite the fact that the Indian Ocean derives its name from us, and with proven secular and democratic credentials, we should have a useful role in the Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, middle-east and south-east Asia. There is little point in garnering favourable opinion in the African continent for a seat at the Security Council, which like the permanent and unconditional extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty will be decided by the big few by browbeating motley votes into submission—diplomatically called a consensus vote. There is a requirement to be more transparent about a naval diplomacy instead of fearing it may sound an alarm in the region.

There is a need to look under the nose and observe how well Pakistan with innumerable problems is efficiently working towards its declared identity of an Islamic state, however much an opportunist it may be. It is seeking an alternate land route through Afghanistan into central Asian Republics, has entered into an undeclared military alliance with the United States and is cleverly discharging its Islamic role as part of NATO-Ifor forces in Bosnia. The British chief of defence staff, Field Marshall Sir Peter Inge, recently said that the Pakistan army chief, General Abdul Waheed, during a recent visit here confirmed that 1,500 Pakistani soldiers will work under the Canadian command as part of Ifor forces, and he offered another 1,500 troops for Bosnia. Pakistan is sharpening its military teeth and India is listed by the United Nations arms register to have purchased only 120 numbers of 130 mm guns anti Mig-29 aircraft from Russia in 1995.

India's role should be centrifugal; expanding outwards from being a credible regional player to seeking a place on the world stage. A big nation like India should not be an opportunist like Pakistan, but must ignore dynamics of real politics, which can best be done by taking stands, however flexible. Most importantly. India with outstanding border disputes with two nuclear weapon nations cannot down play its national security matters when it is perceived to buckle tinder the slightest international pressure on its domestic nation a security agenda.

This brings us to the question of the viability of our indigenous Agni programme, officially described as "technology demonstrator." When taken to its logical conclusion it will become an Intermediate- Range-Baliistic-Missile armed with a nuclear warhead, as it will be absurd to have a Rs [rupees] 300 million weapon system knocking down a few buildings 2,500 km away with a 600 kg conventional payload.

Claims by Indian scientists of achieving super-accuracy for Agni should not be taken seriously, as it is being done to convey an incorrect impression that the missile will have conventional warheads. It is difficult to believe select leaks in the media made by the government that India has successfully conducted research in miniaturising nukes, for the reason that weapons so produced will have a low degree of assurance.

The same is the case with Pakistan, which has not done a single hot test. The compelling need for tests has been demonstrated by France, which despite high powered computers and simulation techniques. needs a certain number of hot tests to have a reliable statistical data for computer stimulation. China is doing the same by testing new nuclear weapon designs. It is difficult to conceive that India will do a second hot test in the foreseeable future, despite the fact that it is now a threshold nuclear weapon state and not a non-nuclear weapon state after the permanent and unconditional extension of the NPT.

India must however, conduct a nuclear test for making war-heads for Agni-missile. A test is also needed for thermonuclear nuclear weapon with a guaranteed assurance. While this may be unacceptable to outside powers, it will be a true barometer of India's non-alignment.

'No Need' To Deny U.S. Reports of Nuclear Test

BK2212101795 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 21 Dec 95 p 13

[Editorial: "No Need for Denial"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr Pranab Mukherjee has denied U.S. reports to the effect that India was planning to conduct a nuclear test at Pokaran where this country exploded its first peaceful nuclear device in 1974. He need not have done that. For one thing neither the U.S. Government nor the U.S. media would believe Indian statements in this regard. For another, whether India wants to explode a nuclear device or not is entirely India's concern and there is no need for the External Affairs Minister to convince the U.S. media on this point. If in 21 years after the Pokaran implosion this country's declared policy of staying away from conducting nuclear tests despite having the capability for, making bombs had not convinced the U.S. Government of the peaceful nature of our nuclear programme, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee's statement cannot be expected to change attitudes overnight. That these reports are part of the U.S. strategy to pressurise India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is obvious. Perhaps the Clinton administration would have preferred secret pressure to achieve the same objective rather than making a public declaration. Reports that the U.S. might impose sanctions in the event of India conducting a test may be premature but these reports in themselves could have been floated to deter any possible Indian action.

For a long time the Indian Government had given the impression of being too willing and ready to succumb to U.S. pressure aimed at scuttling this country's missile development programme. The proper answer to the latest U.S. media reports is not a denial but a clear-cut statement that carrying out nuclear tests or not is India's own business and the country is under no obligation to declare the nature of its nuclear policy. In case there is a threat of sanctions, even a hint of that, the answer should be to repeat Pokaran 1974. This is not to deny the power of the U.S. to manipulate the global economic aid programme to the detriment of this country. But it is better to withstand that pressure than continue to give the impression that India's nuclear programmes and policies will be decided in Washington.

It is a pity that the Narasimha Rao government had remained somewhat ambiguous in its stance on this issue. There is no point parroting the wornout cliche about India keeping its nuclear options when tell-tale evidence is available of India regressing or slowing down some of its most strategically important programmes. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao must send a clear message to the U.S. Administration that its efforts to impose an artificial parity between India and Pakistan in the matter of nuclear development are misplaced. Whatever is the nature of the activity at Pokaran detected by U.S. sources and leaked to American newspapers, the Indian Government does not owe any explanation to anyone including the solitary Super Power of this world. The question is: Will Prime Minister Narasimha Rao send such a message to Washington?

U.S. Aid Amid Nuclear Test Reports Viewed

BK2212114295 Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 19 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Using a Pretext of the Nuclear Test"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The attempt to cover-up Pakistan's nuclear program is seen as the U.S. Administration levels false charges that India is going to conduct a nuclear test. The entire move was so well-timed that the moment U.S. spy satellites relayed the so-called secret information to the U.S. Administration and then to the U.S. media, Pakistan quickly activated its publicity machine to generate propaganda against India at the government-level.

India's main objection to the United States giving lethal weapons to Pakistan was that not only would India be the sole target of the weapons, but that even under U.S. law it is illegal to give such military aid to Pakistan. That Pakistan is making a nuclear bomb is well-known, and even U.S. sources have confirmed this. Still, while circumventing its own Pressler Law, the United States decided to give lethal weapons to Pakistan. Thus, in a way the United States has violated its own policy against nuclear proliferation. To cover-up this contradictory move it was essential for the U.S. Administration to hatch a conspiracy to accuse India before the world. The areas that the U.S. satellite has been photographing in Pokaran is the arena where Indian forces go to conduct their practice exercises. The actual site reserved for the nuclear explosions does not appear in the photographs at all as it is devoid of any activity. No doubt the U.S. Administration is aware of this fact. It appears the U.S. Administration's intention was not to reveal the truth, but to find an excuse to create baseless charges and to create an atmosphere for false propaganda by Pakistan. In order for Pakistan's publicity machine to publicize juicy information, albeit falsely, to indulge its anti-India propaganda, the media was deliberately not given complete information by the U.S. Administration. Without mentioning its own nuclear program, Pakistan made its Foreign Minister give India a warning, under the pretext of imagined war preparations, that India's activities posed a serious threat to South Asian peace.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan, asserted the an armed conflict between India and Pakistan is an increased possibility with the growing tension between the two countries. He believes that local elections in Kashmir cannot be a viable alternative to holding a plebiscite there. He also said that terrorism will not solve the tricky Kashmir problem. He admitted that the Kashmir-terrorists had been regularly receiving weapons from Pakistan. However, Qayoom Khan also accepted that there could be no solution to the Kashmir problem if both India and Pakistan maintained a continued stern attitude. Hence he wants to hold a conference of the Kashmir I leaders from either side of the border in which the non-Muslim leaders also have proper representation. The objective of this conference would be to find a solution to the Kashmir problem acceptable to both India and Pakistan. Perhaps Sardar Qayoom realizes that he is dreaming, for such a conference can never be possible. First of all, Pakistan would not let it happen. Secondly, even if by some miracle a conference becomes possible neither countries are in a position to accept just one formula. Through these suggestions Qayoom Khan is actually expressing the disillusionment in the minds of the leaders of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir concerning the existing Pakistan policies. Pakistan deems such interventions by the Kashmir leaders as potentially dangerous — whether by Amanullah Khan or Qayoom Khan.

U.S. Involvement in Kashmir, Other Issues Viewed

BK2212105095 Delhi THE PIONEER in English
21 Dec 95 p 8

[Article by Ajit Bhattacharjea]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The unnamed Washington official who described Mr. S.B. Chavan's charge that the United States had "evil designs" on Kashmir as "complete nonsense" lacked diplomatic suavity. This justified the protest by the Ministry of External Affairs to the U.S. Embassy. But was the official wrong in insisting that "Mr. Chavan has a pretty consistent record of making such off-the-cuff remarks"? Two weeks have passed since the Home Minister stated, on the floor of the Rajya Sabha, that the U.S. was fomenting trouble in Kashmir and was interested in gaining a foothold there. It is hard to imagine a more serious accusation against a supposedly friendly Government made by a Cabinet Minister in Parliament. If meant seriously, the charge should have set off grave high-level exchanges between New Delhi and Washington and had repercussions on other aspects of the relationship. The tension would have been reflected in the India.

In fact Mr. Chavan's charge has been taken as unseriously as the American official suggested. It has not been noticed in the American Press; in our own, news interest has faded rapidly. The accusation was not part of a prepared statement, but were remarks tossed off during a debate. Ms. Robin Raphel, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, deposed before a Congressional subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific the day after his speech. There was no reference to the charge, nor does it seem to have affected policy.

At home, Mr. Chavan's remarks were neither preceded, nor followed, by top-level meetings of ministries concerned with and affected by a change of public posture towards the U.S. Such preparations would seem essential to orchestrate the Home Minister's statement with other aspects of Government policy on such an occasion. The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister would have been expected to expand on the theme. Instead, there has been silence. Many might consider it fortunate that Mr. Chavan's remarks failed to upset Indo-U.S. relations and was treated as an unprepared outburst. But this reading of the episode downgrades the importance of Parliament abroad, and diminishes our own institutions. It is true that Mr. Chavan was successful in evoking applause in the Rajya Sabha and diverting criticism of the Government's handling of Kashmir. But at what cost?

Pakistan's Diminishing Role

Imagine the British Home Secretary informing his Parliament that the U.S. has evil designs on Northern Ireland (Irish Americans did support the Sinn Fein movement). The U.S. and other governments would perceive a significant change of policy and it would sustain the front pages for days. Diplomats would assume that such a serious pronouncement could not have been made without comprehensive Cabinet discussions and look out for other manifestations of strain. However, no such discussions are known to have taken place in New Delhi. The impression created by the episode is of a Government that functions in an amateurish and uncoordinated manner.

It is hard to discern any recent shift in U.S. policy to justify Mr. Chavan's outburst. That a way would be found to supply Pakistan with some of the arms purchased before they were blocked by Mr. Larry Pressler was evident long before the Hank Brown Amendment was passed by the U.S. Congress; even before President Bill Clinton virtually said so during Ms. Benazir Bhutto's visit to Washington in April. She, too, dutifully responded by saying all the right things to fit the U.S. role model of a moderate Islamic State, Mr. Clinton's remarks on India have been less sympathetic, though the gaffes he made in responding to letters on Punjab and Kashmir in 1993 have not been repeated.

But Pakistan is far from regaining the advantages it enjoyed during the Cold War. It no longer gets arms free. The Hank Brown Amendment authorising resumption of arms sales did not extend to the F-16 aircraft that Pakistan had paid for. Mr. Bruce Reidel, a Pentagon official testified before the same Congressional subcommittee that Ms. Raphel appeared before on the day after Mr. Chavan's remarks. He was quite happy with U.S. relations with India, stating flatly: "The bottom line is that U.S.-Indian defence ties are better now than at any time in the past 30 years." The basis for these ties was laid by the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. William Perry, in the 'Agreed Minute on Defence Relations' signed in New Delhi in January this year.

Mr. Reidel insisted that the Brown Amendment was a one-time exception to the Pressler Amendment; that it would not upset the regional power balance. Pakistan would get some of the supplies for which it had paid and this would help to restore American civil and military ties with it. But the F-16 aircraft would not be supplied to Pakistan unless it complied with the Pressler Amendment.

Is There a Hidden Agenda?

The right occasion for the Indian Government to condemn the U.S. would be if these assurances are dishonoured: If F-16s, or equivalent aircraft, are supplied to Pakistan; or another amendment clears the way for future arms sales. The matter would then be serious enough to be taken up by the Prime Minister; not a Home Minister whose unconsidered remarks carry limited credibility.

On Kashmir, the U.S. favoured Pakistan during the Cold War because Pakistan lined up with the West and India did not. Now Washington more even-handed, though some Indian analysts still seem mired in the Cold War mind set. Recently, American spokespersons have laid emphasis on the Kashmiris' right to a say in determining their future. But we have Ms. Robin Raphel's word that this does not extend to plebiscite. Maximising autonomy, involving as many dissidents as possible in talks on a settlement and trying to avert a clash between India and Pakistan by stressing the Simla Agreement are said to be Washington's primary objectives. They do not necessarily involve separating the Valley from India.

But is there a hidden agenda? Fears of the U.S. trying to establish a base in the Valley seem outdated in an era of sophisticated spy satellites which can spot cars moving on the ground and listen into telephone conversations. U.S. intelligence agencies no longer need the crude monitoring device that Nehru allowed them to install on Nanda Devi. Kashmir is also unsuited as a base for military operations, as our own generals have found. The main advantage available to outsiders from the Kashmir dispute is diplomatic — leverage against India or Pakistan, as required.

In geo-strategic terms, too, Pakistan's utility to the U.S. is limited. Turkey is seen as better placed for access to Central Asia. It is a member of NATO, has closer ethnic ties to the region and better communications and oil pipe links. Pakistan's importance for the U.S. at this time seems directed at the Middle East.

New Delhi has reason for care in dealing with Washington, but it is a many-sided politico-economic relationship, less rooted in mutual suspicion than during the Cold War. The relationship should not be endangered by being used as a plaything of electoral politics.

Iran

Government Denies Intent To Assassinate 'Arafat

LD2112154595 Tehran IRNA in English 1530 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rome, Dec. 21, IRNA — The Iranian embassy in Rome on Thursday dismissed as baseless an allegation raised by head of counter-espionage organization of Palestinian self rule authority, Amin al-Hindi that Tehran intended to assassinate Yasir 'Arafat. Issuing a statement, the Iranian embassy said raising of such allegations originated from the Palestinian official's concern about the Israeli intelligence service Mosad's intention to murder 'Arafat and his aides.

In an interview with an Italy's video-music tv network, al-Hindi alleged that Iran had planned to assassinate Yasir 'Arafat. This was the first interview of its kind that a western media had conducted with the head of counter-espionage organization of Palestine Authority.

Tehran: Not Seeking Pakistani Nuclear Technology

LD2112153795 Tehran IRNA in English 1521 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Oct. 21, IRNA — Iran's embassy in Pakistan categorically rejected the claims raised by some Pakistani newspapers on Iran's proposal to Pakistan to provide Iran with nuclear techology. A press release by Iran's embassy on Thursday stressed that no talks have been held by the two countries' officials to this effect, noting that Pakistani officials also confirm the falsehood of such claims.

Two Pakistani newspapers, quoting unidentified diplomatic sources claimed that Iran had suggested that Pakistan provide the Islamic Republic with nuclear technology in exchange for financial aid packages. The Iranian embassy's statement described the claim as baseless and biased, adding that such false reports were published in Pakistani press for certain purposes.

The statement pointed out that considering Iran's international commitments and its signing of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, all activities of Iran in this respect are performed under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is worth mentioning that Pakistani officials have strongly refuted any cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad in regard to transfer of nuclear techology.

The Pakistani foreign minister on Wednesday denied the claims by the Pakistani press in his address to a press conference in Islamabad.

Reports of Security Operations in Azerbaijan Denied

LD2112142895 Tehran IRNA in English 1418 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, Dec. 21, IRNA — the Iranian embassy here on Thursday categorically denied reports that the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran have entered the Azerbaijan Republic territory to counter Iranian counterrvolutionary elements in Azerbaijan.

The Baku daily 'GUNAI' in its latest issue quoting the Iranian embassy in the Azeri capital said that such baseless claims are made by common enemies of the two countries to prevent promotion of Tehran-Baku relations.

Certain newspapers of the Azerbaijan Republic recently quoting counterrevolutionary sources reported that a former member of the central council of the anti-revolutionary Fada'iyan-e Khalq grouplet, 'Ali Tavasoli, has been kidnapped by the Iranian security forces in Azerbaijan.

Khamene'i on 'Defeated Policies' of U.S.

LD2112191095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the auspicious anniversary of the holy prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, on Wednesday, December 20, a number of officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran met with the leader of the Islamic revolution. The leader, Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, in the meeting, described the occasion as the greatest day in the history of human beings and the day on which the most sublime and purest values came into existence. The leader also described the materialization of social justice as one of the most important objectives of the holy prophet of Islam. Undoubtedly social justice has always been the most valuable ideal throughout the history. This is indicative of the fact that human beings always look for a world devoid of injustice and suppression where the rights of the weak are not trampled upon and human beings achieve real prosperity. Establishment of a just society is the starting point for the freedom of human beings from the suppression that most human societies are suffering from. Today the world of Islam enjoys such divine blessing it can offer the road to social justice through modeling the life of the holy prophet and his progeny.

As the leader of the Islamic revolution stated, today the Iranian Muslim nation is honored to have made a huge move toward the objectives of ordainment to the extent that even the enemies of Islam cannot deny. The adherence to the major objectives of ordainment has caused the threats and plots of the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran to be nullified. As long as the enmity of America and the Zionist regime against the country continues, the Iranian Muslim nation will withstand the arrogant powers by sticking to its values. The resistance against the suppression is a clear path toward social justice and is a strong fortress against the hostile measures of the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The leader of the Islamic revolution, in his speech, once again stressed that the efforts of the enemies to damage the Islamic Republic of Iran's system will remain futile. He described the recent threats and measures of the United States as repeating defeated policies, measures that so far have brought nothing but disgrace for America and her allies. Nor will these measures bear any fruits today, even if arrogant powers are allocating secret budgets to counter the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Kharrazi on Concern for 'Crisis' in Afghanistan

LD2012152195 Tehran IRNA in English
1040 GMT 20 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, Dec. 20, IRNA — Iran's envoy to the United Nations told a special session of the organization on Afghanistan that Iran, concerned for the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan, does its best to help find a peace settlement in this neighboring country.

The permanent representative of the Islamic Republic in the United Nations, Kamal Kharrazi, said in the 50th session of the General Assembly of the organization here on Tuesday [19 December] that the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, resulting in continued killing and injury of many innocent civilians, the displacement of thousands of people and the widespread destruction of property in this war-stricken country.

"It was our fervent hope that after the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan and establishment of an Islamic state in that country, Afghan parties and groups would set aside their differences and work towards reconstruction of their country, but unfortunately, more fightig has replaced a period of calm and the suffering of the people of Afghanistan continues, especially in Kabul, whose people are suffering from both a hard winter and indisciminiate attacks against civilian targets", Kharrazi said.

Expressing his concern about the situation there, Kharrazi added that Iran has spared no effort to help various parties and groups inside Afghanistan to overcome their difficulties and differences.

He also said Iran has repeatedly called upon all parties to agree on a durable cease-fire and a just and lasting political settlement.

"For our part, we continue to use every opportunity to promote peace and will continue to cooperate with others particularly with our neighbors in Pakistan to help achieve peace in Afghanistan which will serve the best interests of all people of the region", he added.

He mentioned that the United Nations special mission to Afghanistan, headed by Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri, has played a crucial role in the efforts aimed at bringing peace and normalcy to Afghanistan. He also commended and supported the efforts of the Organization of Islamic Conference, OIC, in this regard and hoped that the close cooperation and coordination among the United Nations, the OIC, and neighboring countries would provide added impetus to the peace process in Afghanistan.

Quoting the UN secretary general indicating that the incidence of disease and malnutrition in some areas of the country is reaching alarming proportions, Dr. Kharrazi said the need to address these poverty-related issues simultaneously with the rehabilitation of war-affected areas and reconstruction of the country is critical to improving the overall situation in this country and achieving a sustainable process of development.

Since 1980, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been host to 2.5 million Afghan refugees whom we have received and protected with a very high standard of treatment based on our Islamic values and international commitments, he said. Unfortunately, at the same time, international assistance for these refugees and their repatriation have not been commensurate with the size and magnitude of the problems, he added. He continued that thus far, about one million refugees have returned to their country voluntarily, and the process is being monitored through close coordination between the two governments and related agencies of the United Nations.

Last year, in coordination with the World Health Organization, (WHO), Iran initiated a vaccination plan for Afghan children and has distributed 8 million doses of vaccine throughout Afghanistan, Kharrazi specified. Iran has also made arrangements for establishing a joint commission to examine ways of more effectively controlling the flow of narcotics through the region and converting the poppy-growing areas in Afghanistan to useful alternative crops which meet the basic needs of the Afghan people, he explained.

Finally, he hoped that with the adoption of a draft resoltion, the approach of the international community with regard to Afghanistan will enter a new phase. He concluded by saying that the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to do its utmost in these humanitarian endeavors.

The 50th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday focussed on the chaotic situation in Afghanistan and finally approved a resolution in two sections on Afghanistan condition and its effect on international peace and security, as well as on rendering humanitarian international and emergency assistance to help restore peace and to reconstruct the country.

Representatives of the countries of the region and the world analyzed Afghanistan situation in this meeting and called for solving the crisis politically and on the basis of the UN plan. The plan which is initiated by the UN secretary general, Butrus Butrus-Ghali, calls for ceasefire and setting up a provisional council for transition of power.

Among other topics of the meeting was making ground for elections under the international supervision to form a majles and also election of a new president for Afghanistan.

Yazdi Sermon on Congress Decision, Afghanistan

LD2212111695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian
0825 GMT 22 Dec 95

[Second Friday sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of Iran's judiciary and acting Friday imam of Tehran, at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] You have heard that in America once again the Congress has made certain decisions to penalize companies that want to deal with Iran. As I have said on earlier occasions, I am really surprised, and I would like to know the line of thinking of the American statesmen and decision-makers when they sit down to debate such policies. I would like know how they reach their decisions. Why is it that they are not careful enough? Have they not learned from their past experiences? Did they not see that the earlier sanctions did not produce any results, and in fact they proved beneficial to us?

In sum, the world of today is not a kind of a world that would leave itself, bound and gagged, at the mercy of a superpower. These practices now belong to the past, and the world is now free from all of these. The leaders of different states in today's world have opened their eyes and tend to make decisions on the basis on their own national interests. This is particularly true in the area of making policies on foreign relations, especially when the other side of these relations is the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's views on Afghanistan remains the same as before. That is, all the jihad groups should be involved in the ruling system. They should sit next to each other and resolve the issue. Frankly they should terminate the war and stop adding more to the ruins in that country. Our stance remains the same.

The UN rapporteur, who visited our country recently, was assigned to investigate the particular issue of religious intolerance and the minorities. He had programs and a number of meetings. I would like to stress here that the recognized religious minorities in our country enjoy the best possible freedom and comfort under our system. Perhaps nowhere else in the world do the religious minorities enjoy such status. The religious minorities in Iran perform their rituals and live in accordance with their religious instructions. In all the organs and judicial courts they are treated in accordance with their own religion. They enjoy other rights that the rest of the citizens are entitled to.

At this point I would like to reiterate — in the wake of the discussions held during the [UN rapporteur's] visit and meetings — that there is not even a single prisoner in Iran who is imprisoned without committing an offense. That is, if some one is imprisoned and the propaganda directed against our system says that he is detained because of his views, ideas, and statements, I — as the official in charge of the state judicial authority — announce that the allegations are untrue. If, however, a person has committed an offense or a crime because of his belief and thoughts, naturally he is arrested, tried, and is treated in accordance with the laws of the state. [passage omitted]

May God's peace and mercy be upon you all.

Relief Committee Sends Truck Aid Convoy to Kabul

LD2012181695 Tehran IRNA in English
1755 GMT 20 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 20, IRNA — On the occasion of the divine appointment of prophethood Muhammad as the last messenger to mankind, a 30-truck aid convoy carrying flour, rice, cooking oil and blankets was sent to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, by the imam Khomeyni relief committee.

According to a committee official, Abdus-Samadian, the relief package for the war-stricken people of Afghanistan was worth rls 110 million.

He also announced that more such relief convoys would be sent to Kabul next fortnight on 15 Shaban (Jan. 7) the auspicious occasion of the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance to speed up justice on earth).

Another relief consignment is planned for Eid-E Fitr (Feb. 21) after the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan, he added.

Saying that at present, the Imam Khomeyni relief committee has extended its activities to other Afghan cities such as Yekavelang and Mazar-I-Sharif, Abdus-Samadian disclosed that over 10,000 deprived Afghan families are being covered by the committee.

He said that among other activities of the committee are providing regular monthly assistance on both temporary and permanent basis, organizing educational courses for over 5,000 Afghan students, admitting patients to the health centres set by the committee and giving loans and neccessary facilities to orphans.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's Mother Dies

LD2112155695 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] We have been informed that unfortunately the honorable mother of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani passed away today. The body of the noble mother of the president will be escorted tomorrow after the Tehran Friday prayers toward the city of Qom.

Following the death of the noble mother of the president, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i sent a message of condolence to the president. [passage omitted]

Khamene'i Consoles President

LD2112193595 Tehran IRNA in English 1855 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 21, IRNA — The mother of Iran's President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani passed away at 90 here Thursday. The leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, and a number of other ranking government officials have sent him messages of condolence.

In his message to President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani on the loss of his mother, the leader of the Islamic revolution Thursday expressed his personal sorrows, paying tribute to her as "a pious woman and a self-sacrificing mother".

Among others, the head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, and secretary of the National Security Council of Iran Hasan Rowhani also sent separate messages of condolence to President Rafsanjani for his bereavement Thursday.

The body of the deceased, Hajieh Khanom Mahbibi Hashemi, that is to be buried in Qom, south of Tehran, is to be carried to some distance by worshippers at Tehran University campus immediately after the Friday congregational prayers in the early afternoon tomorrow.

Further on Capabilities of Upgraded T-54 Tanks

LD2212101795 Tehran IRNA in English 1007 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 22, IRNA — The 'Safir-74' tank, a version of the 'T-54' tank modernized by the experts of the ground force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), exhibited its military-defensive capabilities here on Thursday.

IRGC Commander-in-Chief Major General Mohsen Reza'i and a number of IRGC ground force commanders were also present on the occasion. Major General Reza'i termed the performance of the tank, fully modernized by the Iranian experts at the Research Center for Logistic Defense of the IRGC ground force, as a great evolution in the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He said the tank was functioning well with high accuracy and speed while shooting and targeting both in stable and motion positions. According to Major General Reza'i the tank is capable of moving and operating five meters deep inside water with additional equipment and about 1.5 meters deep without extra equipment. Among other advantages of the tank which he referred to, were armoured capabilities, swift reaction, accuracy and speed in firing.

He reiterated that the parts used in the tank had been all manufactured in Iran, adding that bulk production of the tank would soon be started. The tank was first deployed in Ashura military maneuvres in which all its shootings in different directions precisely hit the targets.

Shortcomings of Specialized Banks Detailed

96LA0052A Tehran RESALAT in Persian 5, 6, 7, 9 Sep 95

[Series of articles by Seyyed Hoseyn Mirjalili]

[5 Sep p 15]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Part 1

The banking system in Iran is a combination of several commercial and specialized banks.

Commercial banks are those banks in which monetary and credit activities are not related to special areas.[1] The main duty of these banks is to act as an intermediary for funds through accepting funds in the form of loans and participation in and payment of short-term partnerships or other Islamic contracts as well as granting interest-free loans. Hence, these commercial banks are mostly involved with the monetary sector. Since in commerce, domestic trade (especially), and foreign trade, certain amounts are needed alternatively in the short term, these banks are called commercial banks (related to commercial affairs), or because, like merchants who are after short-term and at the same time high-profit activities, they are called commercial banks. In any case, the main difference between these banks and other banks is that their activities are not in specific areas but rather in a variety of areas.

On the other hand, the "special banks" are banks that only engage in special areas of economic activities and guide their activities in special directions.[2] For this reason, they are called "specialized banks" because they are the opposite of commercial banks that are active in a non-specialized and general form. Because of the needs of developing countries, the activities of the specialized banks are concentrated in development, mainly in housing and construction, agriculture, industry, and in some cases exports.

In developed industrial countries as well, similar financial establishments exist that perform the duties of the specialized banks in the developing countries. Such financial establishments are often called "non-bank financial establishments," and are active in investments.

In many countries, developmental or specialized banks are a communication channel between the government policies on economic development and particular economic sectors. The activities of the specialized banks in investment and the investment sector of the economy create a certain contradiction with the concept of a bank.[3]

The most important duties of the specialized or developmental banks are:

1. granting long-term and short-term financial loans, or participation in the investments of companies, as well as granting any sort of aid or loan to develop and improve the condition of companies, or specialist supervision over the best use of the financial resources for the proper implementation of projects;

2. encouraging and facilitating the participation of individuals to use the capital and investment activities needed in the country;

3. development of the investment market and strengthening the relationship of the economic sectors with the market.

Shortcomings of the Specialized Banks

Even though specialized banks have had positive effects on the economy, at the same time, they suffer from certain shortcomings. Here we will discuss a few shortcomings of the specialized banks:

1. Insufficiency of the Mobilized Financial Resources

The financial resources that specialized banks mobilize through accepting checking interest-free loan accounts, savings interest-free loan accounts, short-term investments, and long-term investments are by no means sufficient for the financial resources needed for allocation.

Chart No. 1 shows the situation of the deposits in the Agricultural Bank during the 1368-1372 [21 March 1989-20 March 1994] period and the loans granted.

Chart No. 1. Status of the Mobilization and Allocation of Resources by the Agricultural Bank (1368-1372)

Mobilization and Allocation of Financial Resources					
A. Mobilization of Resources, Industry	1368 [21 March 1989-20 March 1990]	1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991]	1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992]	1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993]	1372 [21 March 1993-20 March 1994]
Checking interest-free loan accounts	85.7	127.6	142.5	196.8	292.1
Savings interest-free loan accounts	31.5	49.6	92.5	143.8	181.6

Mobilization and Allocation of Financial Resources					
Short-term investments	6.9	8.8	11	18.1	33.5
Long-term investments	2.5	5.3	6.7	8.6	27.5
Total of mobilized resources	26.6	191.3	252.7	367.3	534.7
Total of granted loans	44.3	626.4	959.9	1,076.4	1,752

Source: Agricultural Bank, Information Office.

As Chart No. 1 reveals, the financial resources mobilized by the Agricultural Bank during the 1368-1372 years have always been much less than the total of granted loans, so that in the course of those years, they were 3.5, 3.2, 3.7, 2.9, and 3.2 times the mobilized resources from people's funds, respectively.[4]

Notes

1. Iranian Statistical Center, STATISTICAL YEARBOOK, 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991]
2. Ibid.
3. According to definition, a "bank" is an "intermediary financial establishment," whereas the financial activities of specialized or developmental banks change them into "companies."
4. It should be explained that the financial resources of the specialized banks prior to the revolution included Central Bank interest-free loans, government aid, use of syndicate loans from abroad, distribution of bonds domestically and abroad, and attracting deposits.

[6 Sep p 15]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Part 2**

2. Strong Reliance on Loans of Commercial Banks and Government Aid

Because of the insufficiency of the financial resources of the specialized banks, every year the government obliges the commercial banks to place some of their financial resources in the form of interest-free loans or low-interest loans at the disposal of specialized banks. Also, once every few years, the initial capital investment of these banks is increased by the government. The inequality of resources and uses results in the increased reliance of the specialized banks on loans and facilities of commercial banks and government aid. The annual budgets include some amounts as government aid to specialized banks.

3. Increased Deficit of the Specialized Banks in Future Years

A. The Industries and Mines Bank. It is projected that this bank in the course of the Second Five-Year Plan will help the implementation of 550 large and medium industrial and mining projects and 575 small projects, in the form of both granting financial loans and direct investment. The total financial resources needed by the bank in this connection are estimated to be about 5 trillion rials [R], which with the inclusion of other expenditures of the bank amounts to R5.9 trillion. It is projected that of the total resources needed for industrial and mining projects, about 13 percent will be in the form of direct investment and 87 percent in the form of granted loans. The collectable resources of the bank in the course of the years of the plan, including collecting the installment payments of granted loans, profit from partnerships, funds resulting from the sale of units, etc., are estimated at R3.2 trillion. Hence, the deficit of the financial resources of the Industries and Mines Bank in the period mentioned is a total of R2.7 trillion, or about R540 billion annually on the average.[10] [footnote number as published]

B. Agricultural Bank. In assisting in the achievement of the announced goals of the Second Five-Year Plan in the agricultural sector, this bank will have an annual deficit of at least R500 billion in financial resources, which must be procured from resources outside the bank.[11]

C. The Housing Bank. The deficit of the financial resources of this bank in the course of the years of the Second Five-Year Plan is projected at about R500 billion on an annual average.[12]

D. Iranian Export Development Bank. This bank will need an average annual amount of about R250 billion and a total of R1.25 trillion in new financial resources to achieve its goals during the Second Five-Year Plan.[13]

In summing up what was stated above, we can generally conclude that the above 40 specialized banks during the years of the Second Five-Year Plan will have a total deficit of about R8.95 trillion and annually on the average, about R1.79 trillion, for which a solution must be found.

4. Commercialization of Specialized Banks

In the course of 1363-1370 [21 March 1984-20 March 1992], four kinds of contracts—installment sale, civil partnership, advance purchase, and lease with the option to buy—used 37.8 percent, 37.5 percent, 15.3 percent, and 6.4 percent of the total granted loans by this bank, respectively. In other words, on the whole, more than 97 percent of the loans of the Industries and Mines Bank were within the framework of these four contracts, and the reason was the low cost of these contracts compared to other contracts, the ease of calculation, and the rapid. and secure return of the loans with the profit expected by the bank. On the whole, the above four contracts change the specialized banks into for-profit commercial banks.

In the Agricultural Bank as well, the share of the contracts for installment sales, interest-free loans, advance purchase, and service fees of the total loans of the Agricultural Bank during the 1363-1369 [21 March 1984-20 March 1991] years, on an annual average, were 50.9 percent, 22 percent, 15.5 percent, and 7.6 percent, respectively. In other words, a total of 96 percent of the loans of the Agricultural Bank were granted within the framework of these four contracts, while interest-free loans declined.

Among the reasons for the increase in the share of interest-fee loan contracts in the total granted loans of the Agricultural Bank during 1363-1369 was that previously, commercial banks placed certain amounts of interest-free loans with 2 percent service fees at the disposal of the Agricultural Bank, and this bank placed the funds at the disposal of farmers at 2.5 percent. However, recently, the fees on loans have increased to 6 percent, and collecting this fee is not very simple. For this reason, the number of interest-free loan contracts has decreased.[14]

In the Housing Bank, as well, a major part of the loans are handled in the form of civil partnerships, installment sales, and advance sales. The share of these contracts during the 1363-1370 period has been 51.7 percent, 39.3 percent, and 6.3 percent, respectively, meaning that 97.3 percent of the loans in this bank were granted in the form of these contracts.

Hence, it can be seen that the specialized banks also, like the commercial banks, in order to make a profit, have confined themselves to a few contracts and, in fact, are like other commercial banks.

Notes

10. These statistics were announced during the ratification of the Second Plan law by the specialized banks.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. Sadr, Kazem, "Examination of the Problems Due to the Implementation of Islamic Contracts in Interest-Free Banking Operations: Case Study of the Agricultural Bank," presented in the Second Seminar on Islamic Banking, 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991].

[7 Sep p 15]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Part 3**

5. Lengthiness of Procedures of Receiving Loans From the Agricultural Bank

The procedures that a farmer must go through in order to receive a loan from the Agricultural Bank from the time he submits his application to receive the loan and the projected investments in the application can be separated into the following stages:

1. negotiation and giving application to the customer;
2. compiling the file;
3. examination of the direct debt of the cosigner and applicant;
4. examination of the indirect transactional history of the applicant and cosigner;
5. inclusion of indirect files of the cosigner and applicant;
6. acceptance of application; evaluation and approval of loan;
7. accounting operations;
8. maintenance and control of contracts;
9. return of file after payment to the credit office;
10. reporting of statistical data;
11. filing the case;
12. supervision and inspection;
13. delivery of work to customer and customer's operation;
14. collection of debt;
15. issuance of bill of indictment;
16. additional stages according to the case.

Each of these include special stages. For example, the seventh stage, or accounting, includes secondary stages, and the 14th stage—that is, the collection of debts—has 20 stages. In a study concerning the procedures to implement various contracts in the bank, it became clear that the granting of loans through installment sales (machinery), advance purchase, and civil partnership have a total of 89, 97, and 90 stages, respectively. The number of these stages primarily depends on the bylaws of the Central Bank and then the implemental instructions of the Agricultural Bank.[15]

This matter raises costs for the applicant and the bank. Of course, in the past few years, the number of stages of some contracts has decreased to 47, which is still too high.

6. Control Over the Affairs of the Companies

The Industries and Mines Bank, in addition to its own investment projects, is in charge of 160 companies. This bank has more than 50 percent of the shares of 100 companies and less than 50 percent of 60 companies. The status of 114 companies under the control of the Industries and Mines Bank since 1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993] is as shown in Chart No. 2.

Chart No. 2. Companies Under the Control of the Industries and Mines Bank

Kind of Activity	Number of Units
Electrical and service metal industries	19
Chemical and cellulose food industries	33
Textile, clothing, and leather industries	32
Total	114

Source: Industries and Mines Bank, 10-Year Operation, 1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993]

It is interesting that the Industries and Mines Bank not only is no longer a bank and has become a factory, but it has gone beyond its specialty, that is, industries and mines, and has 25 service companies (Chart 3).

Chart No. 3. Service Companies Belonging to the Industries and Mines Bank

Kind of Activity	Percentage
Hotel management	20
Financial services	16
Consulting engineering services	12
Commercial services	8
Oil drilling	8
Banking services	8
Warehousing	8
Insurance services	4
Management services	4
Film production services	4
Shipping	4
Aviation services	4

Source: Industries and Mines Bank, 10-Year Operation, 1371

Hence, the control of the affairs of the companies by the Industries and Mines Bank, which is contrary to the goals of specialized banks, has caused the only specialized Industries and Mines Bank in the country to have be terribly inefficient. Even though the officials of the bank have announced several times so far that they have unwillingly taken charge of a number of factories and companies, keeping those companies and failing to transfer them contradicts their claims.

This is while every year, the Industries and Mines Bank receives a large number of applications, which are either not accepted or, if accepted, are not approved (Chart 4).

Chart No. 4. Number of Requests, Acceptance, and Approval of Projects by the Industries and Mines Bank Regarding Granting Loans (1360-1371 [21 March 1981-20 March 1993])

Description	1360 [21 March 1981-20 March 1982]	1361 [21 March 1982-20 March 1983]	1362 [21 March 1983-20 March 1984]	1363 [21 March 1984-20 March 1985]	1364 [21 March 1985-20 March 1986]	1365 [21 March 1986-20 March 1987]	1366 [21 March 1987-20 March 1988]	1367 [21 March 1988-20 March 1989]	1368 [21 March 1989-20 March 1990]	1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991]	1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992]	1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993]
Applications	283	281	440	166	69	58	79	85	121	407	170	118
Acceptance	153	134	171	98	63	27	43	45	41	89	107	64
Approved	149	150	144	139	71	50	84	72	95	125	19	60

Source: Industries and Mines Bank, 1371.

Hence, it can be concluded that the control of the affairs of companies has resulted in the inability of the Industries and Mines Bank to respond positively to the accepted projects.

Notes

15. Ibid., p. 6.

[9 Sep p 15]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Final Part

7. Decrease in the Share of Farming and Agricultural Services in the Total Number of Loans by the Agricultural Bank

Loans granted by the Agricultural Bank during the 1363-1369 [21 March 1984-20 March 1991] period were mainly for farming, sheep herding, cattle herding, orchard management, raising birds, raising honeybees and silkworms, and agricultural services. Among these, the share of farming (including wheat, barley, corn, sugar beets, rice, etc.) has decreased since 1364 [21 March 1985-20 March 1986]. Also, agricultural services (including agricultural machinery and tools, etc.) also declined,[16] whereas not only is farming strategically important but products such as wheat, rice, and sugar beets and agricultural machinery also place an important role on increasing agricultural production. The decrease in the share of these two sectors is among the shortcomings of the practices of the Agricultural Bank.

8. Failure To Use Sharecropping and Tenant Farming in the Agricultural Bank

Despite the fact that sharecropping and tenant farming contracts are specifically for farming and orchard management, and normally only the Agricultural Bank has the possibility to use them, unfortunately, sharecropping and tenant farming contracts are not significantly practiced by the Agricultural Bank.

This shortcoming shows the organization and organizational shortcomings of the Agricultural Bank in making the two above-mentioned contracts. Even though it is said that the use of those two contracts faces jurisprudential and legal obstacles, in fact, the issue is that the organization of the Agricultural Bank is not such that it can use these two contracts on the basis of jurisprudential and legal standards. It is noteworthy that these two contracts are now widely used throughout the country by farmers and are used under the headings of "half working," "water management," and "one-third working." Hence, if the policies and planning of the Agricultural Bank are revised, vast activities will be controlled and guided by the bank.

Proposed methods to overcome the shortcomings of the specialized banks:

Several methods have so far been suggested by the banking experts and officials in this regard, which are:

1. Creation of banking branches. The Industries and Mines and Export Development Banks lack bank branches. Also, they are not allowed to keep deposit and saving accounts. But the Housing and Agricultural Banks have branches and deposit and savings accounts.

One of the ways to overcome the problems of the Industries and Mines and Export Development Banks is to allow the creation of branches and savings deposit accounts.

2. Regular use of the notes of the budget.

3. Granting loans without service charge by the Central Bank with long-term repayment (10-15 years) plans and direct government loans through the Ministry of Industries and the Plan and Budget Organization.

4. Granting loans secured by the government through the related ministries and organizations, such as the Ministry of Health and Treatment and the Ministry of Higher Education, so that loans can be granted with conditions determined by the related organizations in the form of evaluated and supervised projects under the management of the specialized banks of the country.

5. Obliging the commercial banks to extend loans annually to the specialized banks and payment of service charge subsidies for them by the government.

These suggestions are all to continue the status quo, and once such aid and assistance is provided, the specialized banks may survive. As soon as these resources are stopped, the specialized banks can no longer survive.

The basic solution is that first, the structure of the specialized banks be reformed, and second, the financial resources of the specialized banks be provided through the sale of shares (of course, after the specialized banks become general share companies).

The reason that specialized banks cannot survive if they follow their present course is that their needed financial resources must have the three characteristics of large volume, long term, and low cost. All three characteristics exist in shares. On the other hand, the strong reliance of the specialized banks on the government will decrease tremendously, and they will no longer need the financial resources of the commercial banks or the use of budget notes.

Third, various specialized establishments (the private sector) will be allowed to become active as investment companies parallel to the present specialized banks (proposed share companies).

This will meet some of the existing demands and will reduce the financial needs of the specialized banks.

These suggestions will help the specialized banks return to their original duties, and by changing the structure, organization, and implemental methods, they will have efficiency at the expected level, especially since the essence of interest-free banking is in specialization of the financial activities in the banking sector of the country. Islamic contracts also have been used in this connection. It is hoped that by carrying out the necessary reforms, we will be able to use the existing financial resources of the country in the best and most efficient manner in the specialized banks.

[no footnote information as published]

Reportage, Commentary on Upcoming Majles Elections

Morteza Alviri on Elections

96LA0065A Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 29 Oct 95 pp 1, 9

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—Iran's Constitution has afforded the Majles (Parliament) the authority to act as the highest decision-making body, Morteza Alviri, Majles representative in the second and third terms, said in an exclusive interview with IRAN NEWS.

In addition to tabling votes of confidence and impeaching the government, the Majles can investigate into all affairs and is the ultimate source in seeing to complaints lodged against the three branches, Alviri remarked.

He stressed that the Majles has the authority to even impeach a popularly-elected president, evincing the body's superior power and prerogatives.

"But," Alviri went on to say, "at present, the Majles appears to lack the needed means and mechanisms to fully enforce its authority."

Highly qualified representatives can enable the Majles to fully exercise its authority, Alviri said and highlighted the importance of electing highly competent representatives to carry out this momentous task.

"I perceive that there are two principal shortcomings in the election of representatives in Iran," he noted and cited the first as the inactivity of the parties, thus preventing the people from gaining precise information on the candidates' views.

"Many candidates, consenquently, fetch votes by making hollow promises," Alviri, the president's advisor in the Free Zones' affairs and secretary of the High Council of the Free Zones, clarified.

Second, most MPs have a regional—rather than a macro and national—outlook, he said, adding, "the MPs think of serving their own constituencies, while in many cases, regional interests are contrary to national and macro ones."

Most people vote for candidates who meet their regional needs and, therefore, some MPs, wishing to fetch votes in the next terms, spend their entire time on their constituencies' minor affairs, instead of dealing with fundamental and structural issues, he maintained.

Alviri noted, "this is the secret behind the gradual decline of the Majles from the first term up to the present."

"I regard the first term Majles as the most powerful, while other terms have undergone a decline, because the first-term MPs were mainly the prominent combatant and political figures who attached more importance to the country's overall interests," he said.

Alviri called for fundamental changes in the mode of elections to put an end to this decline.

The political and religious officials should inform the people of the Majles' mission, while groups and parties committed to the Islamic Republic and the Constitution should engage in open and healthy political activities, he said.

Alviri reiterated that in this way candidates with macro outlooks and expertise will be elected and will contribute to the qualitative promotion of the Majles as the most important decision-making body.

"If this happens, the Majles will have a bright and rosy future," he pointed out.

"Pitifully, at present, parliamentary activities are solely carried out by two particular political groups, thus barring the way for the election of many committed and expert individuals," he marked.

This situation will ultimately incur losses on the country and the system, Alviri said and added that an open political climate will enable all political groups to compete for the parliamentary elections.

"MPs with different specialties are needed for various Majles commissions, and if active, the parties can nominate candidates in order to fulfill the Majles' specialized requirements," he noted.

He elaborated that, otherwise, a limited number of people in the provinces might elect MPs, leading to the absence of expert and specialist representatives that could take the helm of the said commissions.

The Majles which, as stated by the late Imam, is the zenith of all bodies, requires informed and knowledgeable representatives, he stressed.

An MP uninformed of the primary economic affairs and principles will not provide mature comments on economic affairs, he marked and added that this is the shortcoming observed not only in the fourth Majles but also in the previous terms.

On the set-up of a group comprised of educated and committed Hezbollah members who have no affiliation to former factions and wings, Alviri noted, "our society is in need of various groupings in the political and social scenes."

"Confining activities to one or two particular groups will never be to the interest of the country," he stressed.

"Undoubtedly, if such a group is set up and if it nominates its candidates for the forthcoing elections, it can gain a landslide victory," Alviri stressed.

Nepal

Deuba Holds News Conference on First 100 Days

BK2112072695 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 21 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, Dec 19 — The government does not claim to have achieved much during its first 100 days in office, but whatever it has achieved during this period is indicative of its future course of action.

This was stated by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba today at a press conference organised to assess the first 100 days of three-party coalition led by him.

It is impossible to fulfill all public aspirations within a short span of hundred days, Deuba said, adding however that the government was not sitting idle either. We pledge to work more vigorously in the days ahead, Deuba added.

He refuted charges on being victimized to party pressures and said the party never interfered with his works.

A number of lawmakers, from Nepali Congress as well as the opposition, had earlier said that Deuba was not receiving due cooperation from party leadership.

The government had eight major challenges which need immediate attention when it came to power three months back, Deuba said. He said that despite all odds, the government was successful in tackling most of those challenges during this period. The challenges referred to by the Prime Minister included, among others, inter-party understanding and political stability, law and order, donors confidence, sound financial discipline and administrative order.

Deuba claimed that the government had also been able to regain the confidence of donor countries who were disenchanted by the policies of the then UML [United Marxist-Leninist] government. Finance Ministry has said that the country had received assurances for foreign grants of over Rs [rupees] 20 billion during this time, of which agreements were signed for about 7 billion.

The Prime Minister also talked of the economic growth achieved during the governments honeymoon phase. He charged the UML with distracting foreign investment because to their double standard policy and said, 68 large and medium industries were registered during the 100 days of the coalition government. Twelve new industries have been registered under foreign investment, Deuba said.

Deubas claim of economic improvement came after a vitriolic attack by the UML lawmaker and former finance minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari at the Parliament Tuesday that the coalition had plunged the national economy in dire straits.

Reiterating the governments focus on decentralization and power to local bodies, the Prime Minister said transformation of Kathmandu Municipality into Metropolis was a major step in this direction.

Despite all the claim of smooth functioning, Deuba is not free from charges of being too sluggish. Party leader Girija Prasad Koirala at a function recently had criticized the ministers for lacking the sense of joint responsibility.

I will try to make the ministers aware of this criticism, Deuba said and highly appreciated the all round cooperation that he was getting from his ministers, as well as from the main opposition CPN [Communist Party of Nepal]-UML.

Editorial on First 100 Days

BK2112074795 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 21 Dec 95

[Editorial: "Uninspiring Stint" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Nepali Congress led coalition government completed its hundred days in office. Such a short span of time may not be enough to evaluate the performance of any government. But, we, should not forget that the morning shows the day.

Unfortunately, as far as the Deuba regime is concerned, though the dawn was promising, the morning has been most uninspiring. For, together with the government, the nation has also been limping along. If Deuba loyalists sum up the governments performance as so-so, then for his detractors the summation would be not so so-so. That is to say, if the governments honeymoon period performance were to be scored, then it would just manage to scrape through with third division marks.

One can easily explain such mediocre performance by the fact that the government has had to function under compulsion. Most of the first hundred days were spent in the balancing act. That is, in accommodating the interests of coalition partners as well as dealing with detractors within the Nepali Congress and keeping party bosses happy. This explains both the unreasonably long time Deuba took to expand his cabinet and its abnormally inflated size. Another thing that occupied the government was surgical operations — transfers and appointments — in the bureaucracy. The coalition government came about (after the Supreme Court verdict) with the intention of not plunging the country into frequent mid-term polls when possible alternatives within parliament existed. The judges obviously had the greater interest of the country, in terms of political stability, in mind when giving the verdict. So far, the government has apparently maintained political stability. But should the price for stability be development and fiscal discipline?

From the common mans point of view, the highpoints of the Deuba administrations 100 day stint are: expensive foreign jaunts, sloth in decision making, the formation of a jumbo-sized cabinet and hikes in the price of water and milk. As one can see, there is nothing commendable in these occurrences. Political stability is necessary, no doubt, but development must follow. If Deuba spends all his time only in balancing interests, he and his government may end up like the person who tried to please everybody. It has therefore become imperative for the government to work out a long term development programme and a short term programme to provide relief to the people. A successful government is one that can deliver. Deuba would do well to recognise that only this will ultimately ensure his governments survival.

Section of Indian Border Reopened After Shootings

BK2112072495 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 20 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Biratnagar, Dec 19 — The eastern section of Nepal-India border which was closed down yesterday in the aftermath of a vicious gangland shooting spree opened again Tuesday [19 December] amid continuing security patrols.

However goods on both sides of the customs area were still unable to move, and the volume of traffic was less than usual.

The border town of Jogbani continues to be gripped with fears of more violence to come in the wake of the fatal shootout that claimed three lives. The town remained closed Tuesday.

On Monday, members of the notorious India-based Zakir gang sprayed another rival gang with a hail of bullets on the Nepal side of the border.

Three Indian nationals were immediately killed in the shootout. They all belonged to the rival Bhagwan Yadav gang. Yadav however escaped unhurt.

Police on both sides of the border are still searching for the assailants who have so far evaded capture.

Biratnagar residents fear the violence may spill over into the town.

Pakistan

Car-Bomb Explosion Sets Peshawar Bazaar Ablaze

BK2112142795 Hong Kong AFP in English 1415 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Dec 21 (AFP) — At least 12 people were killed when a powerful explosion, believed to be a car bomb, rocked this gateway city to neighbouring Afghanistan Thursday, witnesses and police said.

The blast blew up a dozen vehicles and also set many shops on fire in the usually crowded Saddar bazar, witnesses said.

As ambulances evacuated casualties from the area, police sources said the number of victims could increase.

Firebrigade engines were at the scene trying to control the blaze which engulfed two large garment stores and several shops.

20 Dead, 50 Injured

BK2112154095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Twenty people were killed and 50 injured in a car bomb explosion at Peshawar (?Cantonment) this evening. Radio Pakistan's Peshawar correspondent, who visited the blast site, reports that the relief work is continuing and that the number of casualties may increase.

Bhutto Condemns Blast

BK2112163395 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A bomb blast occurred in a busy shopping center in Peshawar Cantonment this evening, in which 20 people are reported to have been killed and 50 others injured. Radio Pakistan's Peshawar representative, who visited the spot, says the blast was apparently caused by a car bomb. APP says a number of vehicles plying on the road at the time of the blast were totally smashed, besides the windowpanes of nearby shops and buildings.

Meanwhile, the prime minister has condemned in the strongest terms the bomb blast in Peshawar, in which very valuable lives were lost. Describing terrorism as the most abhorrent and condemnable act, Ms. Benazir Bhutto said the government condemns every act of terrorism wherever in the world it may take place. The prime minister said such dastardly acts will not deter us from pursuing the principled policy of peace and justice. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said the culprits will not go unpunished and every effort will be made to bring them to book. She directed the provincial government to provide the best possible medical aid to the injured. The prime minister also offered heart-felt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Leaders Condemn Blast

BK2212035995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto have condemned in the strongest terms the bomb blast in Peshawar Thursday in which many valuable lives were lost. Describing terrorism as most abhorrent and condemnable act, President Leghari offered heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and for speedy recovery of the injured.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that the government condemns every act of terrorism wherever in the world it may take place. She said that such dastardly acts will not deter us from pursuing the principal policy of peace and justice. Prime Minister Benazir Benazir Bhutto said that the culprits will not go unpunished and every effort will be made to bring them to book. She directed the provincial government to provide the best possible medical aid to the injured. She also offered heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and speedy recovery of the injured.

The Sindh chief minister Syed Abdullah Shah has vehemently condemned the fanatic and antihuman elements for causing a bomb blast in Peshawar resulting in many deaths and injuries. In a statement, the chief minister expressed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Similar condolence messages have been issued by the chief ministers of Punjab and Balochistan. The governors of Sindh, Balochistan, and Punjab have also condemned this dastardly incident.

The death toll in the bomb explosion in Main Sadar Bazaar, Peshwar yesterday evening has risen to 33. Those killed included the daughter of the NWFP [Northwest Frontier Province] governor and her two children. Police sources in Peshawar told our representative on telephone this morning that 50 people were injured in the blast who have been admitted to various hospitals of the city.

Meanwhile, Army jawans [soldiers], police, and fire brigades succeeded in extinguishing the fire after hectic efforts for about three and a half hours. The head of bomb disposal squad said the bomb was of at least 25 kilograms.

The NWFP chief minister, Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, visited Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar last night and inquired about the health of those injured in the explosion. The chief minister announced that 2 lakh rupees each will be paid to the family of those killed in the explosion and 50,000 rupees to each injured person. The chief minister also visited the site of the bomb explosion. Talking to newsmen, the chief minister said an inquiry would be conducted into the incident and those found involved would be severely punished.

Toll Rises to 42 Dead, 65 Injured

BK2212083495 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Forty-two people have so far been reported killed in yesterday's bomb explosion in Sadr Bazar, Peshawar. Sixty-five injured are under treatment in different hospitals of the city. Condition of 10 of the injured is stated to be serious, while 19 injured were discharged after providing first aid. Police sources told Radio Pakistan's Peshawar representative that about 10 bodies could not be identified due to severe burning.

Meanwhile, relief operation is under way and bodies are being dispatched to their areas after identification. Chairman of Parliamentary Kashmir Committee Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan has condemned the bomb blast in Peshawar. He expressed his sympathies with the bereaved families and prayed for early recovery of the injured people.

'Act of Highly-Trained Terrorists'

BK2212121095 Hong Kong AFP in English 1147 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, Dec 22 (AFP) — Rescue teams fought flames and public panic here Friday as they sought to reach suspected survivors from a car bomb that blew up in the city's main market, wrecking a department store and claiming 60 lives.

Army, police and paramilitary troops were thrown into the rescue operation after the powerful bomb exploded in the city's Saddar Bazar late Thursday.

Rescue workers gingerly tried to reach people believed trapped in the debris of the multi-storey department store ripped apart by the blast, only to beat a retreat when flames erupted from the ruined basement, witnesses said.

Fire engines and ambulances raced to the scene, their sirens blaring, and traffic was diverted as panic-stricken residents ran in the streets, witnesses said. The blaze was eventually brought under control.

Witnesses said the explosion completely destroyed six buildings, while more than 100 shops in a radius of one kilometer (half a mile) were badly damaged. Local doctors said some 200 people were injured, many of them in serious condition.

The blast plunged the city, the capital of the Northwest Frontier province, into darkness and power remained disconnected Friday.

Rescue workers recovered the body of a baby girl from the debris early Friday while several charred bodies were found in gutted cars.

The streets were littered with shards of glass, and the walls of several shops were splashed with blood.

A massive security clampdown was ordered in the city as an investigation into the disaster continued, officials said.

Security forces barricaded the city's entry and exit points and many people were arrested for questioning, police said.

Officials described the devastating attack as the act of highly-trained terrorists, possibly from India, Pakistan's traditional rival, or nearby Afghanistan.

No one, however, has claimed responsibility.

Police Chief Masud Shah said eight Afghan terrorist groups who had been busted in recent works had confessed their involvement in previous bomb attacks in the province that caused alarm but no casualties.

"They finally succeeded" in carrying out a devastating attack, he added.

An administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Indian intelligence agents could be behind the blast.

The incident also occurred less than a month after a car bomber blew up the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad.

The November 19 kamikaze attack left 17 dead and 60 injured.

A local daily, THE FRONTIER POST, said "the Egyptian connection is largely speculated to be a cause" after recent threat from the militant group Al-Jehad.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto vowed to continue her struggle against extremists.

"Such dastardly acts will not deter us from pursuing principled policies and justice," she said in a message, adding the culprits would be arrested and meted exemplary punishment.

The dead included the daughter, granddaughter and grandson and the chauffeur of Khurshid Ali Khan, the provincial governor, according to the commissioner of Peshawar, Gulzar Khan. Their funeral was attended by senior government officials late Friday.

The daughter and nephew of the provincial transport minister, Ataullah Jan, as well as three policemen were also among the dead.

Bomb disposal officers said the blast was caused by some 25 kilos (55 pounds) of explosive, packed in the car parked outside Wadood Sons department store.

The store owner, his cashier and a salesman were among those listed as missing.

Minister: No Extradition of Embassy Bombers

BK2112102595 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 21 Dec 95 p 12

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec.20: Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali today said Pakistan has extradited ten of the eleven terrorists demanded by Egypt but there has been no extradition after the blast in Egyptian Embassy last month.

Replying to a question at a briefing he said, only one terrorist remains to be extradited and the ten terrorists were extradited before the bomb blast took place in Egyptian Embassy.

Of his visit to Egypt he said President Husni Mubarak, is satisfied with the measures taken by Pakistan in the wake of the blast. "We assured them that the culprits of the blast will be brought to book and President Husni Mubarak expressed his satisfaction over the measures taken by Pakistan to nab the terrorists." Sardar Asif said, he also delivered a letter to the Egyptian President from President Farooq Leghari.

He said, at the inaugural session of the Joint Commission of Egypt and Pakistan, he apprised his Egyptian counterpart of the situation in Kashmir and dangers of the nuclear and missile race that India has triggered.

Next meeting of the Joint Commission will be held in Pakistan at the end of December 1996. He said, the Egyptian Foreign Minister also accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan which will take in the first quarter of 1996.

The Foreign Minister said, Egypt and Pakistan reached five agreements of cooperation in five fields. The agreements included avoidance of double taxation, cooperation in maritime, protocol on cultural cooperation, MOU on tourism, and an agreement on cooperation between chambers of commerce of the two countries.

Sardar Asif said, the International Islamic University (IIU) will not be closed and Egyptian assistance will continue in this regard. We will not close down the Islamic University we will make efforts to make it a model of excellence and in this regard the Egyptian assistance will continue.

Bombing Suspect on Hunger Strike

BK2112100995 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 21 Dec 95 p 12

[Report by Muhammad Suhail Gul]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 20 — Ahmad Saeed Khadr, the Canadian national and the Regional Director of Canadian NGO Human Concerned International, who had been arrested under the charges of financing the bombing at Egyptian embassy, is on hunger strike since his arrest on December 3 from Peshawar.

On the 12th day of his hunger strike his condition had become critical on 8th December. He had been shifted from FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] Headquarters to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

He observed the hunger strike against his arrest and the maltreatment with his wife and children by the police and FIA officials.

According to his wife, the doctors are concerned about his health.

Earlier it was learnt that the Egyptian investigators kept him awake for five days, besides using abusive language and psychological torture. But the accused Ahmad Saeed Khadr has refused to talk before the Egyptians.

According to one of his Arab relatives, who met him in the hospital, Ahmad Saeed said that the FIA officials had assured him that they had no evidence against him, but they wanted to satisfy the Egyptian team.

The Pakistani investigators had interrogated him only for 45 minutes after the second day of his arrest when he was shifted from Peshawar to Islamabad, whereas the Egyptian team held three rounds of interrogation, in which they tried to make him admit charges of financing the bombing.

The accused on the contrary is still stuck to his stance that he will answer before the Pakistani authorities.

It was further learnt that to monitor the movement of the family members of the accused, two security agents have been deployed.

The wife of the accused told this correspondent that her husband was already in the custody of the Pakistani authorities. She is alone with her six children therefore why the Pakistani security agencies allowed the Egyptians to watch their activities. [sentence as published]

Six Killed, Others Injured in Karachi Violence

BK2112105295 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 21 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by THE NEWS correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi: Two Namazis (person offering prayer) including a retired Major were shot dead and five more were injured in an armed attack on Imambargah (Shia sect's mosque) Ala Ali in PECHS [residential colony] at Fajr Prayers on Wednesday.

Two of the attackers were later killed in a police encounter, two others were arrested while one managed to escape. The attackers were arrested an a car, a sub-machine gun and 11 T.T pistols were recovered from their possession. Two more persons were killed in separate incidents in other parts of the city raising to six the Wednesday's death toll.

According to police sources, five armed men barged into bungalow No. 65-A in PECHS Block-6, which housed an Imambargah as well, at about 6:30 am when the male residents of the house were about to offer Fajr prayers and after brief interrogation opened fire on them.

The owner of the bungalow, retired army major Ala Ali Jaffri, 60, and a local businessman, Saadat Ali Shah died on the spot while Pesh Imam Faqeer Muhammad, Captain (retd) Ali Ammar Jaffri, son of the deceased Ala Ali Jaffri, Syed Fakhr, Zulfiqar Hisain, and Iqbal were injured.

Pesh Imam Faqir Muhammad told THE NEWS that armed men tied their hands with ropes and questioned them for about 15 minutes. Later the assailants took Ammar to the ground floor where the family lived and searched those for valuable. In the meantime, Jaffri and Sadat struggled to free themselves. The attackers first beat them up and later fired volleys of sub-machine gun fire on all those who were present.

The police were informed about the incident when a neighbor went to the Baloch Colony police station which is situated nearby, after seeing the attackers breaking into the residence.

However, the police arrived late at the scene when the episode had almost finished. As a police mobile approached the Immabargah-cum-residence, one of the attackers who was guarding outside the house opened fire at them. Police returned the fire killing him on the spot. The rest of the attackers fled the area in a car parked just around the house. Police chased them and the second encounter took place near the Mehmoodabad Police Station at Chaneser Goth.

All of the surviving injured were hit in the chest and abdomen were first taken to PNS 'Shifa' [hospital managed by Pakistan Navy] where they are stated to be in critical condition.

Mrs. Alia Mohsina, the younger sister of the deceased Ala Ali Jaffri told The News, that the firing took place around 6:30 a.m. whereas she had informed the Chief Minister's complaint cell (134) about 6:15 a.m. when the attackers had barged into the residence. But, the police reached the spot when the terrorists were escaping, she complained.

During interrogation, the accused terrorists identified themselves as Farhan Iqbal and Shahid Kamal, while their accomplices who were killed in the encounter with police were Ali Haider and Masroor. Police suspect attackers to be members of the Sipahe Sahaba, Pakistan.

Meanwhile, unidentified gunmen restored to shooting in parts of Korangi number 2 1/2, killing 22 years old Ajmal Shah who according to police died when he comae in the line of fire. The police reached the spot and forced the unidentified gunmen to flee. Later the police removed the body to the hospital.

A hacked and decomposed body of an unidentified, 40-year-old man was found stuffed into two jute sack from the sea in Docks area. [sentence as published] According to police the killers tied the hands and legs of the person, hacked him into two wrapped him in jute sack and dumped it in the sea. The body also carried marks of severe torture, doctors at the Civil Hospital confirmed.

Two Killed, Many Injured in Blast Near Faisalabad

BK2212023695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the Associated Press of Pakistan, there was a powerful blast in a passenger bus near Salarwala, about 20 kilometers away from Faisalabad in which two persons were killed and several others injured. The injured have been admitted to District Headquarters Hospital, Faisalabad.

Spokesman Reiterates Stance on Nuclear 'Test'

BK2212030495 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has reiterated that if India decides to carry out another nuclear test, complete responsibility for the consequences will rest with India; and this kind of test will hamper efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear arms in South Asia and bringing about a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The spokesman said this while clarifying Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali's 20 December press briefing, which was given by him on his return home from a visit abroad. In a statement in Islamabad, the spokesman said certain papers did not appropriately report the foreign minister's briefing. He said in his statement that the foreign minister categorically stated that if India manufactures or acquires missiles, Pakistan will also do the same by remaining within the purview of the Missile Technology Control Regime. The spokesman said Pakistan will not allow India to gain any advantage from the manufacture of short-range and medium-range missiles and Pakistan's armed forces are fully capable of defending the country's interests and territorial integrity. The spokesman further said in this connection that India's denial is not trustworthy, because time and again it has changed its stance on this issue.

Sri Lanka

Security Forces Launch Offensive in Kilinochchi

BK2212114795 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The security forces have launched an offensive in the (Tandakudukku) area, south of Elephant Pass, in the Kiiinochchi District. Troops reached an LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] target in the area at dawn yesterday. The terrorists opened fire with small arms and mortars but this attack was successfully repulsed. The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry says that two LTTE cadres died in this confrontation. The terrorists were forced to flee carrying their dead and wounded. The security forces suffered no casualties and subsequently recovered hand grenades as well as other military equipment. They returned to their original position after completing the operation.

More on Offensive

BK2212061995 Hong Kong AFP in English 0601 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Colombo, Dec 22 (AFP) — The Sri Lankan army launched a fresh offensive against Tamil Tiger guerrillas in the island's war-torn north, killing at least two rebels, the military said Friday.

The troops mounted the drive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the district of Kilinochchi early Thursday, sparking fierce fighting, a military statement said.

LTTE guerrillas opened up with small arms and mortars as soldiers advanced at Taduvankoddi, three kilometers (1.8 miles) south of the Elephant Pass, a narrow strip of land which connects the northern peninsula of Jaffna with the mainland.

Troops retaliated with small arms, killing two guerrillas, the statement said.

"Later terrorists fled the area carrying their dead and wounded," it said. "Troops recovered four hand grenades and some military equipment. No casualties (were) suffered by the security forces..."

"Troops withdrew to their defensive positions after completing the operation," it added.

It was the first known fighting between the army and Tigers in Kilino@hchi, which lies south of Jaffna peninsula and is now home to thousands of Tamils who fled Jaffna two months ago.

It was not clear if the refugees were affected by the latest army push. [passage omitted]

Troops Clear Out Tamil Tiger Remnants in North

BK2212020795 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 22 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops engaged in clearing operations in the North yesterday flushed out several small groups of Tiger infiltrators, inflicting heavy losses on them, military sources in Colombo said.

Troops clearing Tolapuram, Moolai, Thunavy, Sandilipay and Vadukkoddai in the Walikamam division of the Jaffna peninsula killed one Tiger during a skirmish. One soldier was killed and another wounded in this confrontation. This was the first fatality the military suffered since the re-taking of Jaffna on December 2.

Troops clearing Suthumalai area killed another rebel.

Troops also destroyed an enemy hideout at Kalmunai Point north of Pooneryn. Tigers who could not withstand army fire fled towards Ariyalai East carrying their dead and the wounded, an official release said.

During these attacks, troops had recovered firearms, hand grenades and other military equipment left behind by fleeing rebels.

Tiger cadres fired at a diesel bowser at the 11th mile post on the Siyabalanduwa-Potuvil road in Eastern Sri Lanka, killing the driver and his assistant yesterday. Elite Special Task Force (STF) commandos who rushed to the scene repulsed the attack. One commando was injured and was rushed to Colombo General Hospital, official sources said.

Meanwhile, our Vavuniya special correspondent reported that some Tamil civilians fleeing in a boat from the Tiger domain in Kilinochchi to their homes in the peninsula were caught by Tigers in mid-sea between Navalkuli and Colombuthurai. Some refugees, however, had succeeded in escaping to the government-held areas in flag-flying boats through this sea route, the correspondent said.

Many travellers from the North had told our correspondent that they were worried about the education of their children.

Some sources had also told him that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eeelam] politburo was due to meet in Vanni jungles shortly to take stock of the current situation marked by mounting resentment of the Tamil civilians against the group.

Tamil Refugees Reportedly Turn 'Wrath' on LTTE

BK1912022695 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 19 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tamil refugees in Thenmaradchi and Vadamaradchi have now openly turned their wrath on the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] for not allowing them to return to their homes in army-held Jaffna town and other parts of Valikamam, our Vavuniya special correspondent quoting travellers from the peninsula said yesterday.

Tamil civilians who had meekly followed the dictates of the LTTE for 12 years have now become rebellious for holding them back in crowded refugee camps against their will. While the majority of the refugees praying for a chance to break loose from the Tiger grip, some emboldened by sheer desperation had fought with Tiger police, reports said. A group of angry civilians attacked an LTTE office in Vadamaradchi.

"Once the people of Jaffna treated Velupillai Prabhakaran as their God Father. But they hate him now for forcing them to evacuate Jaffna leaving behind their homes and properties," the travellers have told our Vavuniya correspondent.

A Tamil who had escaped from Tiger-held Kilinochchi has said: "People in the North too have made as many sacrifices as Tigers had done for the last 12 years. We gave them our money and gold and jewellery. We gave our young sons and daughters for the fighting and lost them. Now after giving Jaffna to security forces, Tigers want us to offer more children to raise another army of 10,000. Now we are fed up with this business."

Tamil civilians in Tiger-held areas are required to obtain "visas" from Tigers to migrate to other parts. And the civilians had to leave Jaffna town and the Valikamam area for Thenamanradchi and Vadamaradchi at the behest of LTTE leaders are now refused "visas" to get back to their homes to resume their normal life.

Tigers however, according to reports, issue "visas" to these refugees to migrate to Tiger-held Kilinochchi in the mainland. Tigers also operate a boat service for those willing to migrate to Kilinochchi.

Housing and Construction Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva who visited Jaffna last Saturday had found that Tigers had stripped Jaffna teaching hospital of its equipment before fleeing the advancing Riviresa [Sunshine — name of government offensive] troops. Tigers also had destroyed the hospital's operating theatre, according to Minister de Silva. Tigers had removed, among other things, 1015 patients' beds.

'Suffering' of Tamils Under LTTE Control Detailed

BK1912122095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Despite wide international propaganda by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], they are unable to provide basic requirements of the civilians who were forcibly evacuated by the Tigers from Jaffna.

Reliable sources from the North told our correspondent that displaced persons who are under the control of the LTTE were suffering immensely. The LTTE office in London in a statement announced that the Tigers were providing all basic needs of the civilians in Jaffna. However, Tamil civilians from Jaffna arriving in Vavuniya described the situation in the country [as heard]. They said that the LTTE were unable to provide them even the basic need of shelter. Several hundreds of Jaffna civilians are now temporarily putting up in school buildings in Killinochchi. Some other civilians are reported to be living in shanties and shafts near the Tandikkulam in Vavuniya. Though the displaced Tamils are willing to return to their homes, the LTTE terrorists are preventing them. The sources also said that the LTTE would not be able to prolong their control over the innocent civilians anymore.

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